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ABSTRACT

Numbers 1 through 5 of the 1983 TECFORS newsletter include these articles: "Topic Schemas (LL): In the Classroom" (David A. Ross); "Using Diagrams to Teach Reading Comprehension" (Tia Johnson, Judy Sheetz-Brunetti); "Correcting ESL Compositions" (Nancy Hooper); "A Schema Theory Bibliography" (Ann M. Johns); "Using Simple Diagrams to Teach Composition Skills" (Judy Sheetz-Brunetti, Tia Johnson); "Diagnosing Difficulties of the ESL Reader in the Content-Area Classroom: Psychological and Structural Factors" (Kerry Segel); "'Relevance' and the ESL Writing/Reading Class" (Ann Johns); "Reading Classes for Foreign Students: The Why and the How" (Dennis Cone); "Steps in Learning to Spell: Programs Based on Social Utility" (Thomas D. Horn); "When Asians Write: What to Expect in Grammar" (Mark Picus); "Vocabulary Development--Questions for Research and a Method for Guided Vocabulary Practice" (Ann E. Daubney-Davis); "Academic Writing versus Composition" (Macey Blackburn McKee); and "Meeting Culture Shock Head On" (Michele Molinaire). Number 3 also contains in-depth book reviews on texts for classroom use or professional development. The other numbers include short book reviews and notes on professional activities. (MSE)

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TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing and reading to ESL and bi-lingual adult students

Volume VI January, 1983 Number 1

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS:

We are pleased to include another contribution by David A. Ross. His article, entitled "Topic Schemas II: In the Classroom", begins this issue's discussion of schema theory applications.

Tia Johnson and Judy Sheetz-Brunetti have contributed a second article based on schema theory. These instructors have applied their techniques successfully to two quite different populations: vocational and academic students. Their continuation of this discussion, "Using Diagrams to Teach Writing", will appear in the March issue of TECFORS.

The third article is by Nancy Hooper, of the University of Nevada, Reno. Her paper first appeared in CATESOL Occasional Papers, 8, Fall, 1982. It has been well received in the West, so we asked--and were granted--permission to publish it here.

Letters and comments are most welcome; we hope that Tim Robinson's statement, which we publish here, will encourage additional response from our readers.

TOPIC SCHEMAS (LL): IN THE CLASSROOM

David A. Ross
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Killeen, Texas

In the previous section of this article (TECFORS, November, 1982), I presented an argument for a cognitive approach to topic selection in EFL composition classes, employing what I refer to as "topic schemas," i.e. broad topic areas which the individual student concretizes with subjects of his own choice. In this part, I will show how the topic schema approach can work in a classroom.

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

1. Methodological Postulates:

A. The examples presented here are designed for a college-level composition course designed to teach foreign students the ability to produce academic expository writing. The syllabus and writing assignments should be so designed that the students will learn writing skills directly relevant to their tasks as university students. It is also presumed that the students have at least a rudimentary acquaintance with their chosen field of study. Of course, it isn't necessary for all the students to be so acquainted, but if the majority are not, then the topics presented below will probably not be useful.

B. The teacher should try to frame the topic schemas so that they will draw on the students' academic pursuits or social experience. I do not claim here that these are automatically the most interesting areas for students to write about, but that they are most likely to elicit compositions which exemplify the skills needed for academic writing.

C. Discussion, both in small discussion groups and in the class as a whole, is an important part of the process of selecting and clarifying the student's topic.

D. For best results, the teacher should attempt to acquire at least a passing acquaintance with the students' fields of study. This knowledge need extend only to familiarity with certain key terms, major problems, subdivisions within the field, or related subjects. The purpose of this knowledge is not to be able to match the student's own expertise, limited though it may be, but rather to enable the teacher to help the student frame interesting composition topics.

2. A Sample Assignment: Extended Definition:

One of the most fruitful basic subjects covered in a college composition course is the extended definition. This practical rhetorical category encompasses important skills such as formula definitions, classification and division, and comparison and contrast. What is more, under the rubric of an extended definition, these skills can be related and integrated together for a higher rhetorical purpose, rather than merely being treated as goals in themselves, as is frequently the case in composition courses.

The final objective of this section of a composition course would be the production of a several-page essay giving an extended definition of the student's field of study, or, if more appropriate, a key term used in the field. The preparation for this task can be fairly lengthy and methodical, and would include at least the following steps:

1. Formula Definition: The students learn the proper sentence forms for definitions, e.g. "An X is a Y which _____", and practice them using terms from their own fields. This practice should be done in class, so that students can attempt to write the definitions without benefit of a dictionary.

2. Classification: The students learn the proper ways to subdivide major ideas, and can practice this skill on their field, giving the different specializations into which their field is divided (e.g. psychology: cognitive, experimental, clinical, etc.) or major aspects of the curriculum required for students pursuing the field (e.g. hotel/restaurant management: business law, food preparation, security, etc..)

3. Comparison and Contrast: This rhetorical pattern, extremely important in its own right, is also very useful for extended definitions, as many terms are best defined in contrast with some other term. One student in optometry that I taught had devoted much of his life to explaining the difference between optometry and opthalmology! Other examples which suggested themselves in a composition class I taught are: chemical engineering vs. chemistry; civil engineering vs. architechture; psychology vs. psychiatry.

4. Synthesis: After the previous topics have been covered, the students are then assigned a major composition in which they are to give an extended definition of their field, or of some major aspect thereof. As part of the preparation for this topic, they should indicate which of the methods discussed above they will use. The teacher will find that different fields lend themselves best to different types of treatment. For example, a student wishing to define the field of dentistry would probably not find it useful to contrast it with another major field, but could classify the different types of dentistry, or could specify the subjects needed to study in order to become a dentist. On the other hand, a field such as electrical engineering could be contrasted with physics.

Throughout this entire activity, the teacher should make use of class and small-group discussion. Group discussions in particular are valuable because they give the student an opportunity to test their ideas on their peers before committing them to paper (or at least before submitting them to the teacher). For best results, the teacher should attempt where possible to group students of different specializations together in the discussion groups. In this way, each student, when trying to explain his subject, or to illustrate a point, will have to consider the audience much more carefully than if he were able to take the shared knowledge of his specialists for granted. This concern for the audience, of course, replicates one of the key cognitive skills required of a good writer.

3. Cautionary Notes:

The foregoing is an illustration of how a topic schema can be used to teach a portion of a standard EFL composition syllabus. The virtue of this approach is that it involves the student in the process of formulating the topic, and helps him prepare for writing about it by attempting to communicate about it to other students beforehand. Of course, the topic schema approach can leave plenty of room to the teacher for explicit instruction in specific aspects of writing. It also leaves room for peer correction of essays, made all the more logical because of the emphasis on classroom discussion during the pre-writing stage.

At the same time, there are limits to its applicability. To begin with, the topic schema method outlined above is best suited to students with an already high level of communicative competence in English. A modified version of it could be used in classes devoted to basic mechanics of writing, but its full potential is more evident in advanced classes which teach the rhetorical structures of expository writing.

Also, needless to say, the emphasis on the students' major fields is but an illustration of a principle, not the principle itself. In fact, many EFL composition classes, especially those in university credit programs, contain a student or two who just don't know what they want to study. One also encounters students who don't feel that their major field is worth writing about. Finally, some students may feel that hearing about other students' fields is quite boring, and unrelated to the task of learning how to write. This isn't so much a repudiation of the topic schema approach as of the specific subject matter. While the teacher should be flexible, and have alternate topic schema available, he or she should still work with the student to develop the topic, rather than simply to impose it from above.

USING DIAGRAMS TO TEACH READING COMPREHENSION

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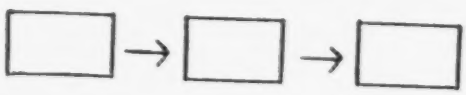
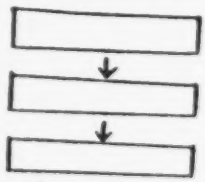
El Camino College
Torrance, CA

A major problem facing students and instructors in ESL classrooms is the speed and efficiency with which learners are able to acquire their new language. At all levels of instruction, there is a great need for students to get their "hour's worth." Because language learning is such a huge memory task and in order to maximize what is learned and remembered, we have devised some simple diagrams for comprehending and using English.

The diagrams are based on a recent theory of artificial intelligence called schema theory which, simply stated, says that information is stored, recalled and classified along associated strings or preconceived relationships (such as analogies, comparisons or hierarchies). Knowledge and memories seem to exist in a kind of branching network or schema, with one idea or memory triggering the next one(s) along the network. Accordingly, when we teach reading or other skills, we stress content and idea relationships using diagrams which are graphic visualizations of the abstract relationships or schemas. We diagram the relationships for clarity and to focus the students on the network of ideas in the text.

The simplest schema/diagram is the linear sequence, which may represent a relationship of chronology, procedure, or causation. The following interchangeable diagrams illustrate a linear sequence:





To exemplify our application of schema theory to reading instruction, we are presenting a narrative exercise. We believe that narratives are the most universal and earliest acquired of the schemas and hence a good starting point.

English narratives can be simple stories containing a short series of events presented in chronological order, and they can also be of varying degrees of complexity. Flashbacks, abundant background material, simultaneous events and scrambled chronologies add to the complexity of a narrative. After doing exercises using simple texts, in which events about one or two characters are presented in chronological order, more complex narratives, such as newspaper articles, can be introduced. The students are to choose a small number of events from the text and write them in boxes on a time-line diagram (i.e. in choronological order). The students are free to choose any events. These events may be from the beginning, middle or end of the narrative. The only requirement is that the students write their chosen events in chronological order. In later exercises more complex requirements, such as choosing the most important events or inferring unstated events, can be added to the task.

In the following newspaper narrative the information is not presented in chronological order. However, it has the same chronological schema as a simple story and can be

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diagramed using simple boxes joined by directional arrows. The student response below is one example of a correct sequencing of events.

Passers-by Ignore Attack on El Cajon Woman

Los Angeles Times 4/9/82.

By MILES CORWIN, *Times Staff Writer*

A 22-year-old El Cajon woman yelled for help and fought off a man who threw her to the ground and attempted to rape her in a crowded shopping center parking lot, while passers-by refused to help.

"It was pretty crowded and she put up one hell of a fight," said El Cajon police Lt. Jim Livingston. "She was very upset nobody helped out. She was screaming, yelling and a lot of people saw it going down. Nobody did a darn thing."

The woman was getting out of her car Saturday afternoon in the parking lot of Parkway Plam in El Cajon when the man knocked her to the ground and attempted to rip off her clothes, police said. The woman yelled, kicked and fought, while onlookers did nothing.

The struggle lasted about a minute, police said, and the man jumped up and ran away. The woman notified police after the incident. Her clothes were torn and she suffered light bruises. She also injured her hand hitting the man, and police administered an ice pack after the incident. The woman was not hospitalized.

"This incident surprised all of us," Livingston said. "San Diego is not New York . . . at least not yet. This is a pretty unusual thing. A lot of times, we get to a crime and find witnesses holding the suspect."

Sgt. Richard Blackmore said he has noticed that people's values are changing.

"Violent crime is on the increase everywhere, probably because of the economy," he said. "And more and more, people are just getting immune to it."

Police are searching for a suspect who is white, about 6 feet 2 inches tall, has a muscular build and was wearing a light blue shirt. El Cajon police are requesting that anyone who witnessed the attempted rape call 579-3301.

WRITE 5 EVENTS FROM THE ARTICLE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

1. A man knocked and attempted to woman
2. The woman yelled for help.
3. The woman went to the police
4. The police took care of her injuries
5. The police are searching for the man.

One interesting aspect of having students fill in boxes is that there are usually as many different answers as there are students, and all the different responses can be correct. However, we have received some unusual (to us) responses. Students recorded as events: 1. "Saturday afternoon," 2. "in the parking lot of Parkway Plaza," and 3. "violent crime is on the increase." In other narrative exercises, students have surprised us by writing unstated conclusions or morals in one of the boxes (usually, but not always, the last box).

After we have discussed the events sequence, we turn to background material and philosophical issues which lead to informative class discussion about cultural differences in narrative schemas. Hall (1976) and Bar-Lev (1982) describe in more detail cultural differences in discourse structures and processing information.

Many students experience difficulties with reading because they are over-whelmed by the amount of information and unknown words in the text. We have found that the students can understand and complete the exercise if they deal with only two events at a time. Wanting to understand every word in the text is usually a transfer of training problem. By assuring the students that guessing from context is a good language learning skill and given this type of exercise, students learn to read quickly without dictionaries. Completing the exercise demonstrates to the students how much they have comprehended and diminishes their fear of reading English.

Research in language acquisition suggests that emphasis on correct usage may actually inhibit comprehension and communication (Terrell: 1977). Accordingly, only after our students have analyzed content in the above way do we deal with the more mechanical language skills such as practicing the new grammatical structures in the text.

Additional support for using this method can be found in psycholinguistic reading theory. Frank Smith (1971) found that anticipation or prediction by readers is essential to their understanding of what is being read: "The basis of comprehension is prediction..."

Predictability in reading is knowing what is likely to come next in the sequence of ideas. To comprehend effectively, a reader must anticipate what will be said next. The students are able to read in this manner by identifying the schema used in the text. Thinking of the events as a pattern of relationships helps students predict what is next in sequence and also recall ideas and vocabulary more effectively. Thus, one advantage of the method is that the diagrams are a tool for quick comprehension and acquisition and good retention.

Another advantage is that students are stimulated and challenged by the cognitive nature of the task. They must analyze the text as a whole and break it down into its parts. Regardless of language proficiency, every learner is able to accomplish this to some extent. Most students complete the exercise quickly and seem to enjoy the process. As one student said, "I like using my brains this way."

To sum up, we find there are several reasons to recommend using diagrams as a means of teaching reading comprehension:

1. The diagrams give students a method for comprehending and recalling vocabulary, content and English schemas.

2. The students are not required to write (lengthy) answers to comprehension questions in correct English. Students simply put information in sequence. Whether students write one word or complete sentences in the boxes is usually dependent on language

experience and not on their comprehension of the text. Both long and short answers are equally correct in schema-based exercises.

3. Whereas traditional comprehension questions focus on detail and distract from the whole or macro-structure, the diagrams help students focus on the macro- or discourse structures. This focus is essential for using context to guess the meaning of unknown words and for predicting, both necessary for skilled reading.

4. Because every student can do the exercises to some degree and because the exercises emphasize how much students comprehend, it is a positive learning experience for all students and appropriate for multi-level classes.

5. Students are stimulated by cognitive activity. They enjoy the problem-solving aspect of analyzing and diagraming a reading selection.

To initiate this kind of activity, we recommend that the instructor look for interesting and relevant texts (rather than looking for simplicity of vocabulary and/or structure). We also recommend that instead of making up detailed comprehension questions, the instructor use diagrams to emphasize and capture the content and the relationships of ideas in the text. Finally, we recommend that the instructor be ready for a challenging cross-cultural experience.

Bibliography

Bar-Lev, Zev. Supergrammar and Ungrammar. Personal copy. 1982

Hall, Edward. Beyond Culture. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1976.

Smith, Frank. Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, Inc., 1971.

Terrell, Tracey. A Natural Approach to Second Language Acquisition and Learning. Modern Language Journal LXI, 325-337, 1977.

CORRECTING ESL COMPOSITIONS

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(This paper contains various methods for the correction of foreign student themes by the teacher and by the student himself. An evaluation chart to assist grading is included.)

As any teacher of composition would agree, correcting student themes is a constant and almost endless task. It is often discouraging as well because not even native speakers at the college level have mastered the mechanics of English composition in spite of the recent "back to basics" movement. For an ESL composition teacher, however, correcting foreign students' themes can be even more devastating than correcting those of native speakers because it requires more detailed explanations, more intricate corrections, and constant personal meetings. In spite of this, ESL students need, and indeed want, frequent writing opportunities, and this places a great burden upon the ESL teacher who must correct stacks of themes at least once a week.

Nevertheless, one of the most delightful differences found in composition classes for international students that is missing in native student classes is the enthusiasm of the students for most of the topics assigned. Their questions, even about grammar, are exciting and worthwhile to the teacher and the whole class. It usually takes much valuable class time to whip up an interest in English composition in native speaker classes, but foreign students very often have sufficient discipline and background to stimulate an interest which is gratifying and which allows the teacher the rare opportunity to work with composition in depth, exploring not just what and how to write but why certain patterns are effective in English.

In our ESL composition classes, which meet five times a week, our students write a sixty-minute weekly theme on a topic which is not known beforehand, and corrected papers are always returned before the next writing day. The topics are drawn from reading assignments and discussions, often inspired by the major fields of study and interests of those in the group. One of the biggest problems we experienced was our students' repetition of the same errors and their inability to proofread, in spite of our use of anonymous, reproduced student papers for class correction and weekly work on the major problems. This prompted us to organize frequent student workshops during class time. In preparation for this workshop, the papers are corrected by the teacher in a special way: we do not correct a student's paper but rather indicate what sort of correction is needed and list the errors at the top of the page:

no topic sentence

2 subject and verb agreement errors

1 pronoun ref.

5 spelling errors

2 wrong words

1 sentence pattern error

The student must then correct the paper by proofreading very carefully and locating the errors indicated. The hunt is like a puzzle that requires the student to concentrate on what has been taught. When the student thinks s/he has found all items on the list and corrected them, s/he brings the paper to the teacher for confirmation. Once students can isolate and correct errors, we have discovered they are much more likely to be aware of their own problems than before, and they leave more time to proofread their papers with greater care.

During the workshop the students can get into groups and help each other (students are much harder on each others' work than the teacher and often know different ways to explain things to each other that are very valuable). The teacher can then spend time assisting slower students and answering the numerous questions that arise. This is usually a very animated session and requires a great deal of expertise and patience of the teacher, both in correcting the papers initially and in conducting the workshop.

Further, to assist the students in understanding how their papers are given grades, we have developed the following chart which, on the whole, takes a lot of the guesswork out of grading and gives the students a sense of the basis for their grades, which they appreciate. It also, we have found, somewhat lessens the endless burden of correcting student papers.

This paper was presented last July at the 1982 TESOL Summer Meeting held at Northeastern Illinois University. It is reprinted with the permission of the author and CATESOL Occasional Papers.

ENGLISH ESSAY EVALUATION

Name _____

Date _____

Essay # _____

Contents		Points	Description
Content and Organization	S	(25-22	Very Good: Topic sentence or thesis statement included; ideas clearly supported, logically developed and relevant to topic assigned.
		(21-16	Good: Adequate development of topic; topic sentence included, organization somewhat loose; logical development; sufficient supporting details, but some repetition.
	U	(15-10	Poor: No topic sentence or a very general thesis statement; not on topic assigned; weak logic; very repetitious supporting details.
		(9-1	Very Poor: No topic sentence; no supporting details; confused ideas; no logic; theme too short to evaluate.
Mechanics	S	(25-22	Very Good: Few errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.
		(21-16	Good: A few minor errors in spelling, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing.
	U	(15-10	Poor: Frequent, careless errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing.
		(9-1	Very Poor: No ability to spell, punctuate, capitalize and paragraph.
Vocabulary	S	(25-22	Very Good: Sophisticated word choices; effective idioms; proper level of diction for topic assigned.
		(21-16	Good: Adequate word choices; a few errors in idioms and usage; shifts from informal to formal voice or vice versa.
	U	(15-10	Poor: Word choice very limited; obscure in meaning.
		(9-1	Very Poor: Word choice indicates little knowledge of English words, or use of foreign language/English dictionary resulting in direct translation from native tongue.

Contents	Points	Description
Language Structure	(25-22	Very Good: Complex constructions; no errors in subject and verb agreement, run on sentences, comma splices, or double, unconnected subjects; consistent use of verb tenses, pronoun references, articles, and prepositions.
S	(	
	(	
	(	
	(	
	(21-16	Good: Some minor problems (usually careless) in construction; ability to use complex sentences with few errors; no more than one major subject and verb agreement error, run on, comma splice or fragment; subject meaning always clear.
	(15-10	Poor: Numerous major problems in sentence structure which hamper communication; frequent (at least 3) subject and verb errors, fragments, run ons, comma splices, verb tense formation and use errors; English word order and sentence patterns disregarded; meaning unclear in places.
U	(	
	(	
	(	
	(	
	(9-1	Very Poor: No apparent use of English sentence patterns; constant (over 3) use of fragments, subject and verb errors, inconsistent pronouns, articles and prepositions; no use of English verbs and verb tenses; meaning unclear or distorted; not enough to evaluate.

General Remarks

A SCHEMA THEORY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ann M. Johns
San Diego State University

REFERENCES WITH DIRECT RELEVANCE TO THE CLASSROOM

There are a number of suggested applications in journals of reading. In addition to these, I have found the references listed below quite useful.

Davies, F. and Greene, T. Reading for Learning in Science and Learning from the Written Word. Schools Council, 160 Great Portland Street, London.

Davies and Greene examined several hundred written texts in native-speaker science coursebooks. From this examination, they have produced matrixes representing the "slots" in what they believe are the underlying meaning structures of science texts. The authors discuss ways to use these matrixes and provide other techniques for "getting to the bottom of text."

Kuan, Caoyuan (East China Normal University). "Teaching EST Through Analyzing the Underlying Semantic Structure of Texts: A Discourse Analysis of Some Scientific Writings " (presented at the Fulbright Program Symposium, Shanghai Foreign Language Institute. 1981).

Kuan applied the Davies and Greene matrixes to a Chinese English-for-science coursebook to determine frequency of text types and applicability of the matrixes. (I have this paper and will send it upon request.)

Hudson, T. "The Effects of Induced Schemata on the 'Short Circuit' in L2 Reading: Non-decoding Factors in L2 Reading Performance." Language Learning. Vol. 32 (1), 1982.

This article is well worth reading, if for no other reason than that it provides a discussion of the approaches to reading research, and the problems encountered when doing studies of recall.

From the study described here, Hudson draws a number of conclusions: 1) much research into L1 effects of schemata and context is applicable to L2 reading; 2) advanced-level L2 readers have better "networks" for fitting in meaning than lower level students; which may indicate that language proficiency is one necessary component for processing; 3) however, L2 students who are taught to use schemata are better at decoding than other students at the same proficiency level.

THEORETICAL REFERENCES

There is a great deal in textlinguistics, cognitive psychology and reading theory and research which can contribute to our understanding of schema.

Particularly useful in this collection are Chafe, "Discourse Structure and Human Knowledge" and Frase, "Maintenance and Control in the Acquisition of Knowledge from Written Materials."

Collections of Literature Reviews:

Carroll, J. B. and Freedle, R. O. Language Comprehension and the Acquisition of Knowledge. Winston. Washington, D.C., 1972.

Current Trends in Textlinguistics (Wolfgang U. Dressler, ed.). Walter de Gruyter. New York. 1978.

This collection contains articles from textlinguistics (Hasan), cognitive psychology (van Dijk and Kintsch) and semiotics (e.g. Petrofi). Excellent, seminal work.

Sanford, A. J. and S. C. Garrod. Understanding Written Language: Explorations of Comprehension Beyond the Sentence. Chichester. John Wiley. 1981.

This is not a collection, but an excellent review of the memory study literature of the last few decades. A number of recall/memory experiments are also described.

Other Readings of Interest:

Meyer, B. J. F. The Organization of Prose and its Effects on Memory. Amsterdam. North Holland Publishing Co., 1975.

This is a rich text which offers the reader a careful examination of a number of factors which influence recall (e.g. the effects of discourse signals) and a methodology for identifying the hierarchy of semantic content in text.

Anderson, R. C., Reynolds, R., Schallert, D. L. and Goetz, E. "Frameworks for Comprehending Discourse". American Educational Research Journal, 14, 367-381. 1977.

Here, Anderson's central thesis is discussed: "that the meaning of a communication depends in a fundamental way upon a person's knowledge of the world and his/her analysis of the context as well as the characteristics of a message" (p. 368). Anderson sees prior knowledge as fully as important as schema, if, in fact, the two are separable.

Lange, B. "Making Sense with Schemata". ERIC/RCS. Journal of Reading. Vol. 24 pp. 442-445. Fall. 1981. A brief but useful ERIC-collection statement about major research work and implications for teaching.

Minsky, M. "A Framework for Representing Knowledge" in P. Winston, ed. The Psychology of Computer Vision (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977).

Minsky has introduced the notion of FRAME...."which functions as an abstract unit of data and procedure in the organization of data." Some contend that frames are the same as schemata; others think of them as limited to words or concepts. Frames remain an important notion in the literature.

Note: The December, 1982 TESOL QUARTERLY contains two articles which draw from schema theory.

St. Edward's University
Austin, TX 78704

November 15, 1982

Dear Editor:

The December, 1981 issue of the TECFORS Newsletter was striking to me for several reasons. First, all three of the articles dealt with ideas quite useful in the writing class. Second, I think that these three articles contained concerns crucial for the writing class. Gregory Clark's message of the need for nonartificial writing, Sue Kelly's use of the journal to encourage students to practice writing and explore ideas, and Ann Daubney-Davis' article on heuristics are all "state of the art." Yet while all three of these articles (and others like them) should be read by any teacher of writing, something seems to be missing.

Daubney-Davis has nicely described many heuristic procedures that can aid students (writers) in the pre-writing or invention stage of the writing process. This focus on the process has been of great importance in the composition field recently, but unfortunately only a few student texts deal adequately with it and probably many courses touch on it only superficially, if at all. The use of the journal (as described by Kelly) is a potentially powerful aid to the student in the writing process, though perhaps not clearly (to the student) as of as much immediate use as other heuristics. And Clark puts forward a needed argument for nonartificial writing to truly involve the student in what he/she is doing (though one might question whether "realistic" has any true connection to "real" except in a morphological sense). We all would be better teachers and our students would be better writers if the essence of these three articles was firmly grasped.

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To put it plainly, however, I guess I still feel frustrated. When I first started teaching writing to foreign students on the college level, I had to start from scratch. It took an initial curiosity (after fortunate exposure from others in the regular English classes) to seek out information on the teaching and learning of writing. Then I had to spend a great deal of time in reading and rereading non-EFL type material (there are very few worthwhile articles in our field on writing). After this, I had to accept what I had read. Even more difficult was to figure out how to use it. Ane now after experimenting, I find I need to experiement more.

I want to nov ask a question: How are we to put all this information we have to use in the classroom? Do we take a bit here and there? To me, that is unsatisfactory. In our teaching of writing we need to deal with our Approach, Design, and Procedure as much as we do in a framework of language teaching. It is too simple to say that now teachers should pay more attention to the process of writing and put the product in a different perspective. The teacher still has the difficult job of structuring his/her classroom. And this grows more difficult when trying to handle programs that have one semester of composition classes in contrast to two semesters of classes. And how do these classes differ from intermediate, advanced, creative or developmental writing courses? And if the research paper is also an objective in the composition class, what about time considerations?

We have to ask, I think, what the purpose of our writing classes is (I know there are many "pat" answers to that, but they are generally too simple). And if we know our purpose, how do we structure our classes? I would submit that for all the words written about these two questions, there has yet to be found a clear answer or one accepted by everyone.

I like how I teach my classes. I think my students learn a lot. My student journals astounded when I first read them (they still do). I encourage others to use it, though the concept has to be explained and nurtured along the way. It is an extremely powerful tool for the writing of students to use one of the heuristic methods, perhaps the one that works best for them, though allowing for individual differences (I like tagmemics and looping, with a dash of brainstorming). To be effective, however, a great deal of time must be spent on it both in and out of class. It's a tool that needs acceptance and conscious (or automatic) use to be effective. I also like students writing poetry, freewriting, and situational or casework writing.

But that is my situation; one I have comparative freedom in. But still I have strictures under which I must operate. Do we ultimately have to structure our classes on our immediate situations? Is it proper that at one school ten essays equal an A and eight a B, or that the best three essays in the course of the semester determine the grade, or that an average is made of four in-class and four out-of-class essays, or that a competency essay finally determines the passing of the course? And this last question does not speak to the grading, but rather to the procedures we use in the classroom.

I am not asking for answers. They are too easy to find. There are too many answers. What I would like are some good questions. Are we supposed to teach students what real writing is about? Are we supposed to teach students how to write essays and research papers to survive their academic sojourn? Or better yet, are we supposed to teach students how to pass a composition course? I don't know - your answer is as good as mine. But there must be the right question out there somewhere.

TIMOTHY H. ROBINSON
AUSTIN, TEXAS

TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing
and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

Volume VI | March, 1983 | Number 2

PLEASE WELCOME--

Ann Daubney Davis, who has agreed to join our team of editors! Readers of past issues of TECFORS will remember her as the guest editor of the November 1982 issue and also the author of an informative series of articles on invention heuristics. We told you a little about her in our November issue: she received her master's degree in English Applied Linguistics from the University of Houston after teaching ESL in the Houston public schools for two years. At Houston Community College, where she is department head of ESL for college credit, she enjoys teaching both conversation and advanced composition courses. We are delighted that all of us will come to know her better through her contributions to TECFORS as the new member of our editorial group.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

We have learned about the usefulness of visual techniques to teach the structures of English grammar. Now Tia Johnson and Judy Sheetz-Brunetti, in their third article for TECFORS, explain how easy diagrams can help foreign students "to use English schemas for the presentation of their ideas."

Also, our reading specialist editor, Kerry Segel, hypothesizes a familiar kind of person with the familiar diagnosis of language deficiency and then suggests ways to pinpoint the student's problems in order to find helpful solutions.

USING SIMPLE DIAGRAMS TO TEACH COMPOSITION SKILLS

Judy Sheetz-Brunetti
El Camino College
Torrance, California

Tia Johnson
SER/Jobs for Progress
Chula Vista, California

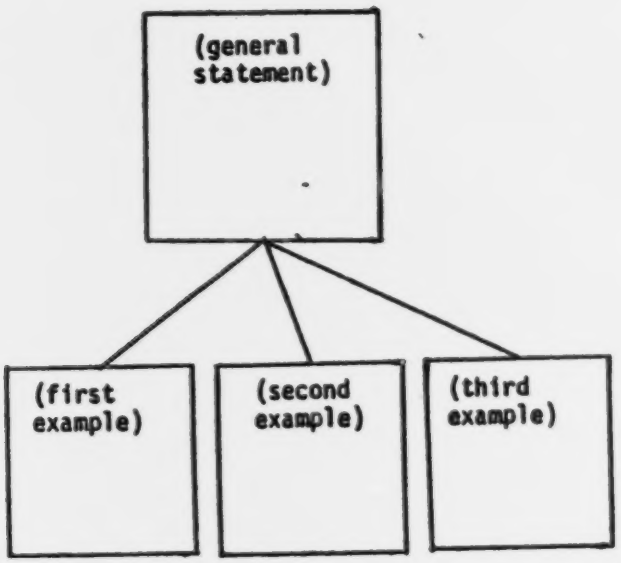
Introduction

For the college and high school ESL instructor, a major difficulty in analyzing compositions written by foreign students is the problem of unnative-like idea organization. This is both a pervasive problem and a subtle one. Pervasive because all L2 learners have systems of rhetorical convention and idea structuring; however, they are likely to be different from English discourse structures. Subtle because it may be difficult for the student and even the instructor to recognize the rhetorical differences. Problems of idea organization may not be identified correctly because they may be confused with syntactic errors or incorrect word choice.

Many of the students who attend composition classes have already successfully completed other ESL courses and may have a good command of grammar, excellent vocabulary and familiarty with the subjects they write about; yet their compositions seem awkward to us. Many ESL instructors note that student compositions do not make sense in a way that we expect them to.

Patterns of idea organization have been called "schemas." Schema theory, as defined by Bartlett (1932), accounts for the way information is stored and retrieved in the mind. Schemas can be defined as branching networks of associated ideas. These networks relate bits of information in a variety of ways. They are used for comprehending input and also for organizing output. We feel that both readers and writers benefit from explicit knowledge of the schemas that are used in English prose.

The expected schema for expository prose, the kind of writing most often required of college students, contains a topic sentence with supporting sentences to expand or exemplify the main idea. In expository prose it is necessary to support a general topic sentence with proofs and examples. This schema may be represented visually for clarity in a pyramid configuration:



We diagram the schema with empty or partially empty boxes at each node so that students may fill out the hierarchical schema with their own unique examples. The diagram can easily be turned into the standard outline form by laying it on its side (thereby aligning the boxes vertically instead of horizontally).

general statement

1. first example
2. second example
3. third example

Written in outline form the schema seems more sequential, but cognitively it is not a linear arrangement. Since all the examples are subordinate to the topic sentence, it is a hierarchical arrangement.

In English writing it is necessary to support a generalization with facts or examples to convince the reader of its validity. The English writer posits his opinion or main idea and then proceeds to analyze its supporting parts. Seale (1978) called this kind of breakdown of large parts into smaller and still

smaller parts an "analytic game which the English speaking mind loves to play." More than a game, it is a system of development which the English reader expects and the student writer must adhere to. The same hierarchical schema is seen by Hall (1976) as "an example of how the majority of Western peoples have been trained to think."

This system of development is not always followed by other cultures. Bar-Lev (1982) says that "topic sentences, and generally the tendency to generalize, are not mere artifices of formal rhetoric and composition teaching. Instead they are (in part) language or culture specific." Martin (1980) has demonstrated that foreign, especially non-Western, students do not process hierarchically arranged information as proficiently as native English speakers.

Differences in idea structuring are evident in paragraphs written by Orientals which are "likely to consist of non-controversial platitudes which prepare the reader for the topic of the composition" (Bar-Lev: 1981) but which never specifically analyze the subject. That is they often contain general statements without supporting examples. An example is the following paragraph written by a Korean student. When asked to describe the physical layout of the college library, she wrote:

> The library is very big. Libraries are necessary for college students. Libraries contain all knowledge and we can learn many interesting things. We are lucky because here we can learn everything if we want. If we read, we can know all these things for using in our lives.

This student never got beyond a very general description of benefits of libraries as a whole. No specific examples or proofs are offered.

Hispanic writers evidence a different kind of problem. Their tendency is to digress from the main topic. Bar-Lev (1982) notes that "the Hispanic student who can't stick to the point...is experiencing the problem of not knowing how Anglos customarily deal with ideas." This tendency is shown in the following example. In his description of the library, one Hispanic student was intrigued by the stamp collection and wrote:

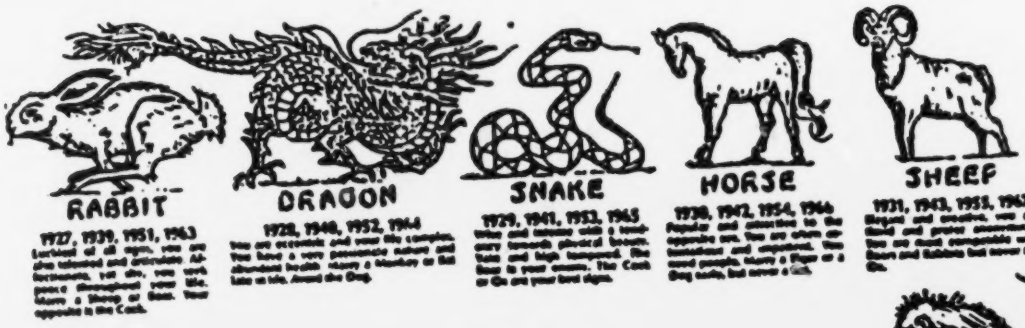
> There is an interesting display of stamps of many countries in a big glass case. Is very unique and colorful collection, and I remember my own stamp collection of when I was a child. Some of these stamps I have seen before.

And so on for several sentences adding nothing to the physical description of the library. These compositions demonstrate that while students may have an adequate command of the English language, they lack an understanding of English schemas.

A Schema-based Method

Since individuals have their own culturally determined schemas for rhetorical discourse, we must explicitly teach students to use English schemas for the presentation of their ideas. The following Chinese zodiac exercise helps students think hierarchically. Why use the Chinese zodiac? Students are interested in the personality predictions by the zodiac. They are amused by the qualities that the zodiac attributes to them, and they find the vocabulary of personality traits useful. As we pointed out in our previous article, content should be as interesting as possible. More important than the content, however, is the use of the pyramid diagram, the visual representation of the schema. If effectively reminds the students to keep their supporting ideas subordinate and related to the main topic. It also clarifies the cultural differences between English and native rhetorical style.

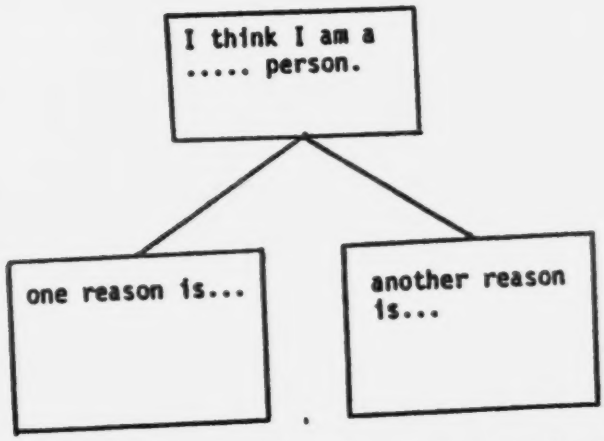
reader than the native speaker, but



CHINESE ZODIAC

The Chinese Zodiac consists of a 12 year cycle, each year of which is named after a different animal that imparts distinct characteristics to its year. Many Chinese believe that the year of a person's birth is the primary factor in determining that person's personality traits, physical and mental attributes and degree of success and happiness throughout his lifetime. To learn about your Animal Sign, find the year of your birth among the 12 signs running around the border. If born before 1924 or after 1971, add or subtract 12 to find your year.

After reading the information under the twelve animal signs of the Chinese zodiac (see examples above), we then fill in the boxes of the first diagram (below) and emphasize that both "legs" of the pyramid exemplify the topic sentence.



We also have several students fill in the diagram on the board. We stress the relatedness of their examples to the key word in the topic sentence. Then, we have students complete the next two diagrams.

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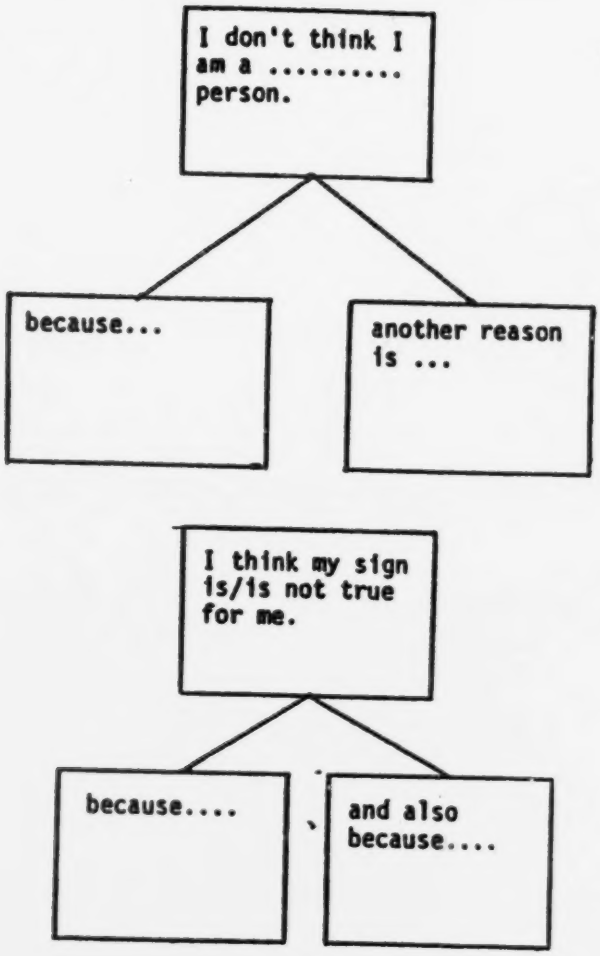

This pre-writing exercise is especially helpful for the reluctant student writer who is intimidated by lengthy composition assignments. The diagrams are a stepping stone toward lengthier prose.

Finally, students try their hand at a short composition based on the above diagrams:

> Composition: Describe yourself in one paragraph. Begin the paragraph with a general statement about your character. After the general statement, give a specific example or examples. Tell about something that you did, or things that you do that prove the statement. You may begin the composition this way: Basically I think I am a ..... person. Let me tell you why.

In this last part, we remind students that although the pyramid shape is not used, the ideas still follow the same principles of subordination and relevance.

Following this exercise we have our students continue with more activities which stress the idea hierarchy of the paragraph and which diagram the schema in the pyramid shape. After completing a number of such exercises, students have a better idea of what is expected in English expository prose. Students often find the constraints of analyzing one topic in depth to be more difficult than the rhetorical styles they are accustomed to, but with practice they are able to do it successfully. Bar-Lev related that one of his students said, "I don't like writing like this, but I will for school."

Conclusion

There are both theoretical and practical reasons for using diagrams to teach students English writing schemas.

First, in the post-audio lingual era of ESL theory, our diagrams respond to the call for emphasis on cognitive activity. Using diagrams to organize ideas is a cognitive and not a mechanical process. The diagrams present empty boxes which students fill with their own unique information. In general, there is no single right answer. The emptiness of the boxes allow the students to push to the limits of their cognitive and linguistic abilities. The students are engaged mentally due to the problem solving nature or puzzle aspect of the exercises.

Secondly, although Krashen and Terrell's natural approach theory (which emphasizes communication rather than grammar) is popular, little has been done regarding writing development. Diagrams give the instructor and students a tool for bypassing grammatical form and for focusing on content. The students analyze, arrange and communicate ideas with the result that they become more aware of English schemas.

The effectiveness of this approach is also due to the visual aspect of the diagrams. Schema theory has an inherent visual bias because it hypothesizes that information is stored in the mind according to visual and sense perceptions. The diagram is a visual representation of the schema which is a mental configuration of visual input. Diagrams clarify and concretize the relationships within the idea hierarchy. Visual thinking and visual exercises also emphasize content and relationships with a minimum of verbal explanation. We want the students to use their new language to communicate ideas in the appropriate schema. Using diagrams gets them to do that because they are focused on ideational rather than syntactic relationships.

Finally, by focusing on the arrangement of information and not on syntactic, punctuation or spelling rules, instructors and students become co-problem solvers. The students gain confidence from completing the exercises successfully and from not having to try hopelessly to emulate model paragraphs. Students turn to the instructor and to each other for feedback about their ideas and not for correction of syntactic mistakes.

In conclusion, the use of diagrams can solve the problem of unnative-like idea organization by visually mapping out the arrangement of ideas in expository prose. The diagram clarifies the relationships of the ideas and helps the writer avoid two common errors in this kind of writing: irrelevance and lack of specific examples subordinate to the main topic. The diagram reminds the students of how the ideas are related and serves as a pedagogical device when explaining why a certain sentence or idea does not fit.

Diagrams are interesting and challenging for both the class and the instructor. Because even the least proficient language users can complete the exercises, this approach makes language learning and composition writing a positive experience for everyone.

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NEWS THAT CAN'T WAIT

Coming in our May issue will be a review of Judith Anne Johnson's Writing Strategies for ESL Students (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983). Judith Johnson is a very special person to us because she founded TECFORS in 1977 and served as its editor to the end of 1980. She succeeded in making TECFORS a "clearinghouse of ideas about teaching composition to ESL students" and also contributed many helpful articles. Now we celebrate the publication of her textbook.

Also, we look forward to hearing more about the proposed Special Interest Group of TESOL for persons interested in the teaching of composition to ESL and EFL students.

A TECFORS FORUM QUESTION?

A recent letter poses this question: "How much tinkering with culture should/could we do?" Tia Johnson and Judy Sheetz-Brunetti have advocated the forthright teaching of English writing schemas, but, interestingly, they have illustrated their methods with the Chinese zodiac. Is this coming together of cultures something that composition teachers should deliberately include in their courses? We would like to hear from teachers and/or students about your views and experiences regarding this question.

DIAGNOSING DIFFICULTIES OF THE ESL READER IN THE CONTENT-AREA CLASSROOM: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

Kerry Segel
The University of Texas at Austin

In your position as an ESL[1] specialist, you are contacted by a student who is a non-native speaker of English and now taking content area college courses. In a course requiring extensive reading, he is not meeting the minimum criteria. You are asked to ascertain the causes of difficulty and provide corrective guidance.

The first stage in the process is diagnosis, and with an ESL reader it is tempting to suggest and probably easy to confirm that the student has a "language deficiency." Such a diagnosis for the ESL reader in content area courses, may have little meaning. For one reason, it is possible that any of the reading-related difficulties of native speakers of English could be problems of the ESL reader; a "language deficiency" diagnosis may ignore these problems. Secondly, language is very hard to isolate from content. Finally, even if "language" is a major inhibitor to the student's progress, remediation or compensation may come for him through other factors.

My point is that careful, thorough diagnosis must precede prescription for the ESL student just as for the native speaker. However, just as it is important not to overgeneralize to "obvious" causes such as language and culture, so should they not be neglected in diagnosis. The diagnostic framework I propose is de-

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signed to include those major factors that are more likely related to the ESL reader than the native speaker, but factors affecting the latter should be included for a thorough diagnosis of the ESL reader.

The framework classifies the factors into two categories -- psychological and structural. Psychological factors are essentially student perceptions that can influence academic learning. Subject matter, the language, the learning environment, and learner strategies (coping skills) are the structures the student must utilize for success. As you read the description of each factor imagine which perceptions and activities would be relevant to it and specific questions that would elicit that information.

Psychological Factors:

1. Past academic achievement

It is necessary to establish two points: what the student has already achieved academically and whether that achievement level is now frustrating or motivating him in his current studies. Find out how the student determines success -- the passing grade, successful studying and test-taking strategies, and rewards may differ radically from the U.S. system. Student comments such as "I was so good," "I had no trouble in my own language," "I don't like studying" and "I only studied for finals" likely relate to this factor.

2. Cultural adjustment

Problems adjusting to the larger cultural milieu can readily influence academic performance. Much literature stresses the influence of cultural and affective aspects on language learning; this influence extends to content learning as well. A recent study investigating a group of international students in Britain concluded that for advanced students, cultural rather than language problems were the major impediments to their progress.[2]

3. Perceived ability in English

Since the complexity of language makes proficiency hard to gauge accurately, subjective judgments of proficiency may be quite unrealistic. A student may oversimplify his academic difficulties as resulting from a supposed language deficit, and thus not be willing to consider other causes or suitable means of remediation. He may verbalize this deficit as "I don't know enough words" or I don't understand English well enough to get anything from the lectures."

4. Perceived modes of learning

Stereotypically, a student expresses the belief that there is only one way to learn (memorization) and that failure arises due to an inability to memorize. In this case, explore with the student his past academic environment.

5. Reaction to self/others perceived level of success in the academic setting

Does the student determine his success in relation to native or non-native speakers? Is the criteria of success considering background in the environment or experience with the subject matter?

6. Time management

The student may have an unrealistic view of how much time is necessary or preferred for a given task. He may not perceive the need for a study schedule or study skills training. Develop questions that will tap the student's study strategies.

7. Perceived value of the academic experience

How important the course, subject area or college experience is to the student can significantly influence his performance. The legal requirement to maintain a full course load, possible restrictions in selecting preferred majors, and prestige factors in choosing certain subjects may influence the student to select a program of study in which he has little ability or interest.

Structural Factors:

1. Subject matter

As the prime focus of the content area is the learning and retaining of subject matter, this factor cluster should be diagnosed thoroughly. There are two levels at which student difficulty could arise -- in the general understanding of the subject and the demands of the particular task.

Related to the more general level are the following issues: Does the student understand the modes of inquiry, criteria or skills of the subject? What is included in the subject (the domain)? What critical concepts must be learned? Is there an understanding of the specialized language and vocabulary? What is the historical context of the discipline? (This latter question is especially relevant to students from countries with substantially different technological and historical traditions.) What is the instructive value of the discipline?

Determining the demands of the particular task should always be a concern of diagnosis. What is the purpose of the task -- comprehension or recall? Is it reading a text or taking a test? Is the nature of the task understood? What level of understanding is required by the task -- awareness, information gathering, analysis, synthesis or application? How does the particular task relate to other tasks or larger units? Finally, in analyzing the task, it is essential to isolate that portion of the task which provides the difficulty.

2. Language

Language proficiency diagnosis is a complicated and controversial issue which has been treated widely.[3] For the advanced ESL reader the most fruitful approach would be to begin with a complete unit of organized prose, often referred to as the textual level of analysis. Within expository prose, subject areas will have their own styles or formats of presentation, called registers, and comprehension difficulty can result from lack of familiarity with that register. It is suggested by Henry Widdowson[4] that two registers within a language (e.g. scientific and literary English) are further apart linguistically than scientific registers across two languages.

In conjunction with determining the style of text the student is reading, the specialist must discover what background information and concept understanding the student brings to the particular text (see subject matter factor). First language research has demonstrated that prior knowledge outweighs major text difficulty (readability) factors in establishing passage difficulty. Establishing a conceptual and information framework for a text, then, can help compensate for lack of linguistic information.

Having a relevant text and knowing the student's background, the specialist should ascertain the student's understanding of the organizational and cohesive features of the text: the sequence and organization of each paragraph, main ideas, topic and transition sentences, inferences where called for, and phrases and words that signal transition, clarify reference, and are central to understanding.

Sentences, phrases and words are the traditionally analyzed components of language and need to be in reading diagnosis, but it is important to be selective, using the guideline of text understanding. Common lexical difficulties include sub-technical vocabulary (words common to most expository prose), words with multiple meanings, false cognates, and items used for functional or relational

purposes (however, the latter, etc.). Recognition spelling should be considered -- a student can mistake words for similiarly spelled ones.

The other component of language that should be investigated is syntax. Basic syntax should rarely be a stumbling block; however, a complex or alternate pattern, and fine semantic distinctions achieved through syntactic manipulation may be misunderstood.

3. Learning environment

The instructor is the central figure the student meets in the learning environment. How clearly has the instructor stated goals, assignments and competencies? How is classroom interaction organized? How willing is the instructor to offer extra help?

The student may have developed relationships with other college support personnel such as the foreign student advisor, counselors, tutors and other instructors which would support remediation.

What is the study network of the student? Does he participate in study groups where his first language is used? What about tutoring or the use of supplementary materials? Has the library been explored for its use of explanatory material as well as quiet study space?

The learning environment extends beyond the classroom; an underutilization of that environment may result from experience in prior academic settings, especially in countries where formal extended networks are not in place or not seen as useful. Diagnosis must seek to establish how the academic support network could be more effectively used.

4. Coping skills

This factor should elicit strategies that have been successful for this student and show how they could aid in overcoming current difficulties. How has the student coped with this subject area previously? Has the subject been encountered before? Are there first language materials available to the student? What non-reading alternatives (listening to lectures, working in study groups) could compensate for difficulty with reading material?

Summary and Conclusion:

The factors which I have presented in this article should serve as the focus for developing a diagnostic instrument or approach suitable to the EFL reader. As you shape your instrument or approach, use the following points as your guide.

1. The ESL college student is at least as heterogeneous in goals, desires and needs as the native English speaker.
2. The crucialness of the abstract "language variables" can easily be overrated. Language should not be considered apart from text or context.
3. The questions and details of a diagnostic tool must be modified over time in line with results.
4. The diagnostic instrument is a crucial but only first step. The types of remediation or intervention must also be carefully planned for each student.

To best diagnose and prescribe for the ESL reader with difficulty in the content area, we must consider the reader, the content, the classroom and the language.

TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing
and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

Volume VI | May, 1983 | Number 3

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Our focus in this issue is on materials, specifically texts which we believe you would like to consider for your classroom use or professional development. Let us know whether you feel that in-depth book reviews are a useful feature of TECFORS.

In our March issue we asked the question "How much tinkering with culture should/could we do?" In other words, what should be the role of culture in the teaching of composition or reading to non-native English speakers? We want your reaction, ideas, or experiences. Drop us a line, paragraph or article about this question--or another idea that concerns you--at TECFORS, Intensive English Program, 1103 West 24th Steet, Austin, Texas 78705.

REVIEW

Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why
by Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen (Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1982)

Written for instructors of English-speaking students, this book has ideas that can bring about "real" communication--involving the skills of speaking and listening, as well as writing--in the ESL composition class.

When I first saw the title, Beat Not the Poor Desk, I was intrigued. What audience was being advised not to despair--student writers faced with papers covered with red marks, instructors wearily filling margins with repeated explanations of the same problems, or both? Glancing through the opening pages of the book, I found a quotation from Ben Jonson urging would-be poets to practice often, and if "the dignity of the ancients" yet escaped them, to try another time. "If then it succeed not, cast not away the quills yet, nor scratch the wainscot, beat not the poor desk, but bring all to the forge and file again; turn it anew." Ben Jonson's encouragment was clearly appropriate for the title of Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen's book, for students taught by their methods and their program, I learned, discovered the excitement--and the consequent stimulus to do their best work--of writing a recognizable literary whole and of having an alert, encouraging audience. Moreover, they found--with pleasure--that there was useful writing which couldn't be done incorrectly, and they improved their writing skills by beginning, not with their "teacher's analytic conclusions," but with carefully directed writing tasks and continuing, not with drills, but with "incremental repetition." If there was any desk beating to be done, it was the result of the best kind of creative frustration instead of the despair of failure.

The organization of the book's sixteen chapters is governed by the five elemental skills, which are introduced in the first chapter and then further explained and illustrated in the subsequent chapters. These five primary skills are as follows:

1. Prolific writing
2. Beginning writing for others with the whole structure
3. Making observations and separating them from inferences
4. Writing both abstractly and concretely
5. Rewriting.

(Pages 4, 5, and 6)

How Ponsot and Deen discovered the way prolific writing "generates and sustains writing" (p.4) is narrated in Chapter 4, which also shows how they assign it and work with it in the classroom. Chapter 4 replies to common objectives to assigning prolific writing, as well. Chapter 2, "Structures: the Fable," and Chapter 3, "The Parable," are illustrations of the skill called beginning writing for others with the whole structure. Ponsot and Dean have found that teaching the fable step by step is an excellent way to give their beginning students success in creating a literary whole. (Most foreign students also quickly recognize and enjoy this ancient story-telling form.) After practice with the fable, the students are ready for a family story handed down from their grandparents--the parable. Both the fable and the parable end with aphorisms, which can be used to illustrate and generate various types of sentences. The next skill, making observations and separating them from inferences, is explained in Chapter 5, "Working with Writing in Class." (This new teaching method is discussed below.) The following skill, writing both abstractly and concretely, becomes the basis of the expository program described in Chapter 6, "Transition to Expository Essays: Student Writing as Literature," Chapter 7, "Two-Part Essay Shapes: Coordinate Structures" with a coda, "Lists," Chapter 8, "Two-Part Essay Shapes: Structures of Subordination," and Chapter 9, "Coda: Analysis." This abstract and concrete writing is the movement from the general to the particular that is the substance of much western writing. (A later paragraph will describe Ponsot and Deen's unusual way of choosing and making writing assignments, as explained and illustrated in Chapters 6 through 9.) The last elemental skill, rewriting, is discussed in Chapter 10. Here Ponsot and Deen distinguish the "four phases in the work the writer does after the first draft," which are "rewriting, revision, copy-editing, and proofreading" (p.114). Beginning with a decent sentence for which they ask the students to supply new versions, they show the students what to look for in revising their own sentences. At the end of the chapter, they discuss rewriting as the authors' right to evaluate or test every aspect of their work, comparing it to their original image.

The "five elemental skills" also influence the final chapters of the book, which are as follows: "Grammar and Graphics" (11), "Reading Writing" (12), "Writing about Literature" (13), "Polar Power: Abstract and Concrete" (14), "Exercising Writing: Syllabi" (15), and "A Sense of the Whole." Readers of these chapters and the "Afterword" will learn the grammar that Ponsot and Deen consider essential to teach and the ways they teach grammar, how they mark essays, and what their syllabi are for a basic writing class and a freshman composition class, as well as a summing up of their teaching philosophy.

ESL students, I have found, can also learn to write without resorting to beating their desks! In particular, they respond to the special aspects of Ponsot and Deens' program related to the writing assignments and to the observation procedure. After the students have written fables and parables, the assignments take the form of incomplete "seed sentences," which Ponsot and Deen have derived from their own reading. A passage from Thoreau's Walden, for example, becomes simply "Once I was_____; now I am _____ " (p.4). The students then generate completed sentences such as these: "Once I was shy; now I am mellow," "Once I was fat and hated myself; now I am slender and happy," and "Once I played soccer as if a fire were in me; now I study and smoke two packs a day" (pp. 72 and 73). After sharing their sentences, the students each choose one and write a two-part (or two-paragraph) essay about it. Ponsot and Deen have collected many ideas for similar "seed sentences" from literature

and formed them into the incremental program of assignments dealing with ideas from the perspectives of coordination, subordination and analysis (Chapters 6, 7, and 8). With each new assignment, the students' visions of their own whole essays arise, first, from their previous writing and, second, from the idea, substance, and even organization germaine to the "seed sentence." Beat Not the Poor Desk contains examples of student essays (including those of foreign students) resulting from these assignments--essays that are well-organized and delightfully alive.

It is the writing and the reading of observations, however, that bring students to the edges of their chairs. In my classes, it works like this. As a student reads her paper aloud, everyone listens. (No one even takes notes because in the act of writing a person may stop listening. P. 51.) As soon as the student finishes reading, everyone--including the teacher--writes observations about the paper for perhaps two minutes. (These observations are about what is most important or most interesting in the paper or what the students remember. From the beginning, adverse criticism has been outlawed; it is the author's right--and sometimes that of the teacher--say Ponsot and Deen, to decide whether something needs to be changed. Also, statements of inference, especially negative ones such as "the essay is senteimental," are discouraged; rather, statements of observation like "many words in the essay name emotions" are called for. P. 5.) The next step is for everyone to read his or her observations aloud. Much of the class's real learning about writing occurs as the students listen to the observations and discuss them. Occasionally differences in the observations lead even to a demand by the students for a paper to be reread!

Af first, I was a little disappointed at my students' inability to leap to astute literary comments in their observations. However, I soon discovered that these ESL students were exhibiting skills that I had earlier worked at with the technique known as "slogging." The first kind of observations that ESL students usually give, I discovered, is a running paraphrase of the paper that they have just heard. Of course, if they can do this, they are on their way to surviving their college lectures! Also, they are developing a skill that they will need in the writing of research papers. Further, paraphrases are useful in class because the students often remember different details. As the reasons for these differences are discussed, the forces shaping selectivity--both by the writer and the listener--assume an importance in the minds of the students that few teachers could hope to achieve by a lecture. Also, the paraphrases lead naturally to a discussion of the order of the details. The second kind of observation that ESL students write is the summary--often a jewel of a concise, comprehensive statement that I once plotted for days to coax my students to deduce. In addition, everyone makes progress in listening comprehension without anyone's calling attention to what is happening. Problems in pronunciation are dealt with when the students ask, when someone doesn't understand, or at the end of the discussion when we are reviewing what we have learned. Actually, pronunciation is not a real hurdle most of the time. And, yes, the comments about the writing come, too. By the end of the class period, it is clear that a great deal of valuable, genuine communication has taken place about writing and the way it is meshed with what we care about most.

It is true that Beat Not the Poor Desk does not have quite everything. For example, it does not explain how to teach students to document quoted material or to write a research paper. Also, ESL teachers will want to use a handbook--as Ponsot and Deen themselves do--for grammatical explanations and examples. In addition, many ESL instructors will want their students to have a text like Judith Johnson's Writing Strategies for ESL Students (reviewed in this issue of TECFORS) or Joy Reid's The Process of Composition (Prentice Hall, Inc., 1982; reviewed in TECFORS, May 1982). However, teachers who use a textbook with their students will also find that Beat Not the Poor Desk is a guide to helpful insights about writing and the teaching of writing, about the use of the "seed sentence" drawn from literature in the making of assignments, and, in

particular, about the writing-reading aloud-listening-observing-reading aloud-discussing-rewriting procedure. Perhaps most valuable to teachers is the way this last procedure lifts the shadows from their students' thinking. Now the teachers can begin where the students really are and teach with questions truly relevant to their students' needs.

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REVIEW

Writing Strategies for ESL Students by Judith Anne Johnson
(MacMillan, Inc., 1983; teacher's manual available)

When a colleague recently told me about the new composition textbook that she had adopted, I felt only the smallest hint of humility when the title was unfamiliar. This was mainly because while there are new titles out constantly, there are in fact few novel ideas behind those titles. I am happy, therefore, to have completed my reading of Judith Anne Johnson's Writing Strategies for ESL Students. It is new, indeed.

Writing Strategies is a text designed for use in special non-native speaker sections of freshman composition. The students who enroll in such courses have been admitted to a college or university; consequently, Writing Strategies for ESL Students is definitely an advanced-level text. It consists of a review section on grammar and mechanics, sections on the paragraph and the theme, and a brief chapter on documentation. Johnson suggests teaching the review first, followed by the paragraph and finally, the theme.

Judith Johnson takes a "models approach" to the teaching of composition. A quick glance reveals no diagrams or pictures, but in their place, text, and in great quantity. In chapters on revision within the paragraph and theme sections, the author provides numerous examples of both professional and student writing. The models in Writing Strategies are not always faultless, however. According to Johnson's pedagogy, a student learns more about the process of creating good prose through studying careful, detailed revision of selected paragraphs and themes than he or she might by reading professional finished products. To give an example, the chapter on revising paragraph-length discourse tirelessly works through successive versions of the same student's paragraph for twelve pages. To put this method in as few words as possible, the process of creating is taught from as close as one can get and still see it--it is taught through revision.

The actual texts have been carefully chosen with non-native speakers in mind. Some are student writing, many deal with academic areas students are likely to be studying, and most deal with topics that are of interest to college students. In contrast to many of the literary or culture-laden readings common in freshman composition texts, Johnson's models do not generally require an insider's view of American culture to be understood and appreciated.

The text is designed for students to work with paragraph-length discourse first, and then with themes. Johnson explains in her introduction that students who can handle and apply principles of assertion, proof, and unity in well-organized paragraphs should then be able to apply these principles to longer pieces of writing. Johnson's paragraph section includes chapters on selecting details (support), organization, and revising. She considers sweeping assertions and incomplete or faulty development to be crucial stumbling blocks for ESL students, and thus begins the paragraph section with the topic of support. The same pattern of chapters is then repeated in the theme section.

The organization chapters are a strength of this book. The models are stimulating selections of professional unedited writing, and the suggested exercises are both practical (write an exam question for one of your courses which would require a chronologically organized answer) and creative (write a cause and effect paragraph on this topic: Misunderstanding American idioms can be embarrassing). Judith Johnson is not bothered by reading selections that are not perfect, uncontaminated examples of rhetorical structures. On the contrary, she points out the artifice and dullness of writing with all the proper signals and structures in the proper places. She instead stresses overall organizational patterns and mixed patterns in writing; thus, she moves easily in her explanation of chronological organization from a short story by Chekhov to a history of the pronoun you in English.

There are areas that receive less than adquate attention in Writing Strategies. Invention, topic sentence or thesis,and unity, especially at the paragraph level, need fuller treatment. The first section on grammar and mechanics is the weakest part of the text. The grammar in general could focus better on ESL students' problems. The sections on punctuation and clause structure are not really geared to non-native students. The treatment of the passive is based on form; examples and exercises in context, showing how and when to use the passive, examining its efffect on a text's cohesion, would be more appropriate at this level. The same is true of the sections on transition words and tense. Some sections (articles, pronouns, modifiers) are good, but this grammar section covers many topics in very little space, therefore functioning neither as a useful handbook nor a review.

Writing Strategies for ESL Students is primarily a composition text whose strengths and innovations are many. In particular, the level of sophistication of its readings and treatment of rhetorical structure should appeal to ESL programs which work closely with their institutions' English departments. It is hoped that a future edition will improve the grammar review of this otherwise intriguing book.

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REVIEW

Crossing Cultures: Readings for Composition by Henry Knepler and Myrna Knepler (MacMillian, Inc., 1983; instructor's manual available)

Crossing Cultures: Readings for Composition is essentially an anthology of 64 selections (mainly excerpts) focusing on the diverse cultural settings and experiences of America and Americans, which has been designed for American students in a college composition course. The authors give three reasons for this approach to composition: the impact of cross-cultural topics on classroom discussion, the emphasis on the first-person narrative that encourages the student to write about his/her own experiences, and, as demonstrated by the inclusion of first-person narratives in the text, the fact that the students' own writing will be for an audience, "often an audience whose background differs widely from their own." That acknowledgment of diversity is clearly represented in these 64 selections, whose characters (and authors) include Japanese-, Chinese-, Jewish-, Mexican-, Black-, Greek-, Puerto Rican- and Native Americans, WASP's, Brazilians, Russians and West African Tiv. More general social and language issues are represented in excerpts such as "Future Shock"(Alvin Toffler), "Effects of Development" (Ivan Illich) and "How to Talk about the World" (Peter Farb). While Maya Angelou, Harry Golden, Michael Novak, Jonathan Swift and William Labov represent the diversity of better known authors, there is as much diversity represented in the works of the lesser known. The editors have selected their works to represent rhetorical diversity as well; some of their categories include description, narration, classification and division, comparison and contrast, definiton, argument and persusion, journals, and poetry. Questions and suggested composition

topics following each selection draw on both informational and rhetorical aspects of the reading.

The readings are hard-hitting, poignant, profound, exciting--just what I would want for an ESL class. However, as the readings are not simplified or embellished with preview questions, glossaries or marginal notes, the text is best suited for advanced level students having instructional support. Given these caveats, the book offers a lot of flexibility. The selections are as short as a 1½ page essay and a 31-word poem, but they average 6½ pages. The thematic divisions need not be covered in the order they appear in the text, and sections and individual readings can be skipped. Each reading can stand on its own, but several readings on a related topic or a rhetorical area would seem to be a good teaching unit.

Just how would one introduce and teach a given selection? The authors don't attempt to answer that, but,to me, each selection is memorable in such a personal way as to suggest its own methodology. "From Vienam" and "Ellis Island" contrast the tribulations of refugees across time. "Ritual at McDonald's" and "The Japanese Model" define and compare and contrast social and cultural forces in the industrialized society. Humor is alive in this quote from Leonore Tiefer's "The Kiss": "When the Thonga first saw Europeans kissing, they laughed, remarking, 'Look at them. They eat each other's saliva and dirt.'" Discussion, here we come.

The potential for lively conversation with these selections is endless, but I question how--beyond the motivation issue--useful they are as composition models. There is a formidable appearance about polished reading that discourages a budding author. The instructor would probably wish to introduce alternative models demonstrating stages of development of the relevant rhetorical and informational aspects the student was to emulate, and do any direct teaching as if the main selection weren't available. In short, I find Crossing Cultures most stimulating as a reading-discussion text but not too helpful in developing the ESL student's composing ability.

Even if Crossing Cultures: Readings for Composition is not suitable for your ESL program, there is one place where it definitely belongs: in your hands. I have found more cultural insights contained in this collection of superbly written and carefully chosen selections than any other book I can recall having read. I feel definitely better prepared to cross cultures with my students as a result of my journey with this book.

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QUALIFICATIONS FOR A SYSTEM OF MARKING PAPERS

1. It should be a learning tool.
2. It should show students what they do well.
3. It should emphasize the elements that make a piece of writing valuable to its readers.
4. It should enable students to understand their errors.
5. It should provide a way for the students, not the teacher, to correct the errors.
6. It should provide the students with further information and opportunities for practice to enable them to gain control of difficult constructions.
7. It should encourage students to be responsible for what they have learned.

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TECFORS

A newsletter for instructors of writing and reading to ESL and bi-lingual (adult) students

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"RELEVANCE" AND THE ESL WRITING/READING CLASS

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> A problem that most composition instructors have faced is growing separation between the teaching of composition as a skill and its application to specific subject matter... Students often do not understand why they are in a composition class and how success in learning what we have to teach them will help them in other classes or after graduation. This lack of understanding is translated into a lack of enthusiasm for the work itself, typically taking the form of, say, an excuse for a late paper formulated as a conflict between composition course requirements and those of a "real" class, like chemistry. "I couldn't do my essay because I had a chemistry midterm," is an excuse that the student will believe to be self-evidently valid. The student is, in a way, perfectly right. The teaching and learning of writing as pure technique, writing without a purpose, is not an educationally proper approach to literacy.
>
> (Holzman, 1983, p.293)

One of our major concerns in teaching ESL writing (and reading) to adults is relevance (or irrelevance); yet, as Holzman points out, there continues to be a "separation between the teaching of composition as a skill and its application to subject matter."

For example, we often teach writing and reading classes in which the essay is the model, only to discover that this form is seldom necessary for university or professional work (see, e.g., Kroll, 1979), though it may be central to satisfying a writing requirement set by the English department. When I teach the traditional five paragraph essay to satisfy this requirement, I find that less proficient students learn to produce the model but have major problems with adapting it or producing other written forms when the audience, content or situational demands change.

One way to design classes which are more appropriate to student needs is to tie them directly to the student's other academic courses. Krashen, at the University of Southern California and T. Johns, at the University of Birmingham (England) are two people who have been advocating this practice for some time. Bi-lingual educators, in California at least, have been developing this "adjunct" concept in K-12 classes.

At San Diego State University, the Educational Opportunity Program, under the leadership of Laurel Corona, has been assigning its students to "adjunct" English classes for the past year, in cooperation with professors in the sciences, social sciences and humanities. Each English class is paired with an academic class (e.g. mythology) in which 15-20 EOP students have been enrolled. Tutors, already familiar with the subject matter, accompany the students to their academic classes, take notes, read the assignments and perform all class tasks except the completion of written work.

During the English class periods, the instructor, a trained ESL teacher, is assisted by the tutor in assigning work which is directly related to their academic class. Typical assignments include: 1) reconstruction of lecture notes in various forms (e.g., essay answers, reports, summaries and paraphrases); 2) summaries or paraphrases of the readings; 3) writing based on the readings for a specific audience (e.g., a layperson who has not been enrolled in the course); 4) oral reports, debate and discussion leading. The ESL instructor grades these assignments for grammar, spelling, organization, and other English-related skills while the tutor looks at appropriate use of the academic material.

The results from this adjunct class experiment have been highly successful. As might be expected, student response to the English class, which they used to resist taking, has been very positive. The grades in the academic classes have been better than average for the group as a whole, a bonus for students who generally have trouble adjusting to academic requirements during their first year in the university.

The long-term benefits, improved reading and study habits and a positive attitude towards academic classes, have yet to be measured, but it appears that students will apply these skills to their work in other classes.

Dr. Corona, who should have written this piece, is busy planning for next year's adjunct program. I hope to join her in teaching the English EOP classes soon, at which time I can write something more substantial about the results for TECFORS:

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READING CLASSES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS: THE WHY AND THE HOW

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I The Case for EFL Reading Instruction

In recent years scores of universities and colleges across the nation have implemented remedial/development programs. Whether they are called learning labs, writing clinics,or skills centers, most of them emphasize enhancing students' writing and reading abilities. Many institutions also offer courses (e.g., "College Reading," "Study Skills," "College Reading Techniques") to improve reading speed and comprehension. While such programs and courses may benefit EFL students, non-native readers have needs that require specialized attention.

Given the importance of the reading skill for academic success, a program which attempts to meet the English language proficiency needs of foreign students at the university level would be woefully incomplete without a reading component. Of even greater significance is the frequently misunderstood fact that EFL readers who read slower and with reduced comprehension do so largely for different reasons than native speakers of English. In general, three factors demand the existence of an EFL reading skills course: the culture gap, the language gap, and the skills gap.

The Culture Gap. The differences in backgrounds between the native and non-native reader are critical. Steffensen (1979) suggests that the difficulties that foreign students have with reading comprehension are due in part to mismatches between their cultures and the U.S. cultural viewpoint that is so predominant in the material they must read in college courses. A special EFL class can help sutdents overcome the problems posed by these differences.

The Language Gap. A second reason for maintaining a distinct reading skills course springs from the obvious difference between the way the native speaker and the EFL student relate to the language itself--the code. The native mastered the code by the time he started school and has used it for years to ingest information,whereas the foreigner is still struggling toward that goal. Hatch (1974: 55-57) cites various studies which found several different reasons for EFL readers' problems: (a) the duration (rather than the number) of eye fixations as compared to U.S. students, (b) phonological interference, (c) inability to predict syntax, (d) misinterpretation due to inattention to graphic cues. Hatch concludes her consideration of what complicates second language reading by admitting that perhaps it all boils down to "inadequate grasp of the language."

The Skills Gap. The third factor is reading skills. As Yorio (1983) explains, a person who knows the code may have never developed decoding skills. The reading problems experienced by the native reader arise primarily from the lack of skill, but in the foreign language classroom the source of difficulty may be either a lack of knowledge of the language itself or inadequate reading skills or a combination of the two.

According to Rivers (1968: 216), the assumption is often made by foreign language teachers that reading should not be problematic for students who have mastered the reading skills in their own language already. She contends, however, that virtually the only carry-over from the student's native language training is "a certain comprehension of what reading is about and a certain awareness of the importance of letter and word combinations." Clarke's (1979) research, which attempted to measure reading ability both in the student's first language and in English, sheds some light on why this is the case. He found that a person who reads well in his native language may be unable to use effective reading strategies in his second language because of what he terms a "language competence ceiling." He hypothesizes that "limited control over the language 'short circuits' the good reader's system, causing him to revert to 'poor reader strategies' when confronted with a difficult or confusing task in the second language" (1979:138). Groff's (1982) review of the literature concludes that research

> ...would seem to refute the assertion made by some that any student can read specialized material if he/she understands the technical vocabulary. It would seem, therefore, that ESL students must have high-level skills in both logical thinking, as well as in the reading and writing of English. These skills must be taught, as ESL students do not necessarily transfer these complexities from their native languages to their second language (1982:17).

"Mainstreaming" foreign students into regualr reading courses without regard for their particular needs puts them in a sink-or-swim situation. This submersion (vs. immersion) approach is tantatmount to expecting a child to learn to swim without waterwings or even instruction. There is a better way.

II. Procedures in the EFL Reading Class

Of course, second language teachers often disagree about the finer points of that better way, i.e., the various components, methodologies, and emphases of an EFL reading program, but the following three general suggestions are a small sampling of the many possible ways the above mentioned concepts can be applied to the development of a reading skills course for adults using English as a foreign language.

(1) Because of the culture gap, the EFL reading class should be designed to provide cultural information which will enable the foreign student to accurately interpret what he reads in English. Texts that focus on cultural differences (e.g., Levine and Adelman, 1982) can be helpful in this process, but as much as possible authentic unedited materials should provide the basis for identifying and examining cultural concepts. The key here would seem to be moving from the known to the unknown in such a way that the students experience reading as a communicative process, not just an exercise in decoding linguistic symbols. Widdowson (1978: 91) says that reading materials "should draw upon and extend the learner's knowledge of usage while at the same time developing his knowledge of use, thus deriving reading ability from the comprehending skill."

(2) This brings up the problem of the language gap--inadequate grasp of the language. Hatch (1974:57) suggests that we need to "teach the student phonology, vocabulary, syntax--that is, we must teach him to 'grasp the language.'" In order to do this, the reading teacher needs to focus on training rather than testing. Reading, or more precisely studying a written text, has often been used as a method for teaching foreign languages, but this is not the same as developing reading skills. For example, having students read aloud and asking the traditional comprehension questions are both testing activities rather than actual teaching. We need to concentrate on the process and not the product, on the skill and not the content (Yorio, 1983). Teachers should choose (or design) activities that help the EFL reader understand the material, rather than simply evaluate how well he has understood it (Dubin, 1982:2).

(3) Due to the skills gap--the fact that not all L_1 reading skills transfer to the L_2--an EFL reading course would (a) make students conscious of strategies such as previewing, skimming, drawing inferences, guessing words from context, et., and show them how these can help them; and (b) train them to choose and implement the appropriate strategy for differing types of tasks (Tyacke, 1981). Textbooks based on this approach are available in increasing numbers. One of the first--and still among the best--is Reader's Choice (Baudoin, et al, 1977).

Eskey's (1973:169) guidelines provide a good summary for these necessarily brief comments on EFL reading:

> In the ideal language program for advanced foreign students, the reading component will not be an adjunct to the teaching of oral skills (since reading may be the most important skill to master) but instead will concentrate on reading for its own sake, and will not attempt to teach the reading skill directly (since no one really knows what reading is or how readers do it) but will instead provide instuction in the critical skills required at each level of the reading process and plenty of practice in reading itself.

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Spelling. That's right--spelling. Misspelled words seem a part of almost every ESL student composing effort, and whether we ESL teachers care to admit it, misspellings affect clarity and judgments of student writing. Yet little exists in ESL literature on the teaching and learning of spelling. Thus TECFORS felt that it would be worthwhile to call for a discussion of spelling. To set the stage, we asked Dr. Thomas D. Horn, chairman of the reading area, the University of Texas at Austin and a specialist in spelling, to present the "corrected test technique" he advocates. We hope that this article will simulate comments from you on spelling.

STEPS IN LEARNING TO SPELL: PROGRAMS BASED ON SOCIAL UTILITY

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Most modern spelling programs reflect the prodigious amount of research in learning done over the years, and their suggested steps in learning to spell are quite similar: the learner pronounces each word, looking carefully at each part as the word is pronounced; says the letters in sequence; tries to

recall how the word looks and says the letters; checks his attempted recall by comparing with the correct spelling of the word; writes the word and compares the written attempt with the correct spelling; repeats these steps until the word is correctly spelled. In their entirety, these steps involve learner use of visual, auditory and kinesthetic imagery and, most importantly, attempted recall.

A number of current spellers utilize learner study before testing. A less frequently used, but extremely valuable approach is to test before studying. A major advantage of testing first is to release students from going through the above steps with words they already know. As a result this method saves valuable study time and reduces the chances of boredom.

When each student corrects his or her own pretest as the instructor spells each word orally in rhythm, the student is using the corrected test technique, the most efficient single method of learning to spell. Experience has demonstrated that provision for this immediate feedback during oral correction has resulted in significantly higher student scores.

When inaugurating the use of the corrected test, it is especially effective to retest and correct immediately following the initial test and correction to show learners how much they have learned. A number of teachers have observed the dramatic effect of introducing the corrected test by saying, "Here is a way you can learn to spell without studying." Nevertheless, in addition to the corrected test, each student has the option of using those study steps of most use to him.

It may be seen that the corrected test emphasizes recall and utilizes visual, auditory and kinesthetic imagery as do the study steps noted in paragraph one. Its use also has the advantage of individualized spelling instruction since learners can pair off at times with one assuming the instructor role, thereby releasing the instructor to work with individual students. Also, the motivational effects of peer teaching, immediate reinforcement, and studying only those words that are not already known are extremely positive. There is also a great deal of flexibility in the number of words to be learned by each student. In a number of cases, better spellers have elected to learn three to five times the usual number of words in a week. For poorer spellers, the teacher and learner together may reduce the number of words to be studied at any given time, and the teacher can provide individual assistance in areas such as developing letter-sound relationships.

Still another advantage of the corrected test is the focus upon individual and group reduction of errors. The instructor tabulates on the chalkboard the number of learners making five errors, four errors, three errors and so on; multiplies the number of students in each category by the number of errors; then adds the products to get the total errors. Through the focus on error reduction, the poorer speller has a better chance to improve his self-concept and peer-status through reducing the group error total rather than rarely or never attaining the hallowed condition of "getting a hundred."

Time for studying the misspelled words may be provided immediately following the test, but the test-correct-retest-correct procedure is the most effective. Students for whom the corrected test technique is particularly powerful may prefer to pair off with another adult for peer testing. To maintain a spelling progress report, the results of the final test should be compared with the initial test error totals. Whatever time is alloted to spelling instruction should be on the basis of fast-paced learning experiences (such as the corrected test technique described above) rather than going through the motions, whatever they are, in a routine way.

150 FREQUENTLY MISSPELLED WORDS

From the English 1300 Instructor's Syllabus
Division of Arts and Humanities, HCC

Submitted by Ann Daubney-Davis

The following words have been divided into 15 groups so that one list can be covered each week.

1. absence
accommodate
accumulate
achievement
acknowledge
acquainted
acquire
acquitted
adolescence
aggressive

2. amateur
anxious
apparent
argument
athlete
athletics
auxiliary
believe
benefited
business

3. category
changeable
character
comparative
competent
competition
conceivable
conscientious
conscious
criticize

4. curiosity
deceive
definite
desirable
desperate
disappear
disappoint
disastrous
discipline
dissatisfied

5. doesn't
ecstasy
eighth
embarrass
entirely
environment
erroneous
etc.
exaggerate
excellent

6. excitable
exhilaration
existence
familiar
fascinating
fictitious
finally
forcibly
foreign
freshman

7. fulfill
government
grammar
height
hindrance
hurriedly
hypocrisy
independent
indispensable
intelligence

8. irresistible
kindergarten
knowledge
laboratory
maintenance
maneuver
mathematics
meant
millionaire
mischievous

9. misspelled
necessary
niece
ninety
ninth
noticeable
nowadays
occasionally
occurred
occurrence

10. omission
omitted
optimistic
outrageous
parallel
pastime
peaceable
perceive
perform
permissible

11. perseverance
persistent
personally
pertain
possession
preceding
prevalent
primitive
privilege
procedure

12. proceed
professor
psychology
questionnaire
receive
recommend
religious
reminisce
repetition
restaurant

13. rhythm
ridiculous
sacrilegious
schedule
seize
sense
separate
sergeant
shining
similar

14. sophomore
speech
strength
superintendent
supression
synonym
tendency
tragedy
truly
twelfth

15. unnecessary
unusual
usually
vacuum
vengeance
villain
weird
won't
writing
written

Our May issue carried a review of Beat Not the Poor Desk: Writing: What to Teach, How to Teach It, and Why by Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen (Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc., 1982). We are delighted to share Rosemary Deen's response.

A LETTER FROM ROSEMARY DEEN

Dear Nancy Lee and TECFORS,

Thank you for your wonderfully thorough, intelligent review of BEAT NOT THE POOR DESK. Nancy Lee's account, informed by her own teaching genius, gives your readers a double benefit.

Nancy Lee's paragraphs on Observations are especially interesting to me because she develops my idea more freely and entirely in the sprit in which I conceived it than I could myself when I first worked it out. She welcomes summary/paraphrase; how churlish I was when I could imagine observations I wasn't getting! I like the way she defines the value of different summaries: "the forces shaping selectivity--both by writer and by listener--assume an importance in the minds of students that few teachers could hope to achieve by a lecture."

Her remarks are confirmed by other ESL teachers. Because our writing skills are a working set, an aptitude for even one skill gives a writer a chance to jump into the whole set. ESL students seem to be more highly selected for ambition and intelligence than the average college freshman, and they suffer from being unable to demonstrate their abilities in humanities courses. I love to see them come into their own with observations. And there they can use all the language they have.

One or two exceptions--probably semantic differences. Ms. Lee says that "abstract and concrete writing is the movement from the general to the particular," but Marie Ponsot and I are trying to hold on to the distinction between abstract and general because abstraction is simple and intuitive and necessary to the writing of literature.

Most untrained people can't generalize even on the level of "Mints have square stems," and most of their generalizations are tedious stereotypes. But we all know by intuition such abstractions as (these are Locke's examples): relations (three things are more than one), form (pencils and water mains are both cylinders), examples of form, and meaning. The great generalizations of science rise from chains of abstraction/generalization. Members of a general class (mammals) share most of their characteristics; members of an abstract group share one or two characteristics (mercy). Generalization is complex and requires lots of knowledge; abstraction is simple mentation.

Most important to us, abstraction/concretion is the axis of literature, while general/specific is the information axis. We believe one learns to write only by writing literature (not necessarily by reading it). This idea gets confused if we identify literature as the fiction genres of poetry, drama, story. Literature is generated between the abstract/concrete poles of writing. Just trying to convey information won't "lift the shadows from student thinking," or show students how writing is "meshed with what we care most about," as Nancy Lee says.

I don't believe writers need a handbook. Handbooks are derived and synthesized from primary works: a good dictionary, a manual of style, books of usage. College students should have the source books. In our work on "grammar" we use good student sentences. This is one of the techniques explicated in our new book, The Writer's BEAT NOT, which we're getting to Boynton now.

We could never have written a book for writers directly out of classroom practice, but had to draw practice through the refining principles of an analysis of writing and inductive teaching. Now we know what the simplest parts and connections of our ideas are. The "What to Write" part of the book is only 60 pages, but it contains the material for four courses--two years of writing. Each section is a page or a little more.

When I give workships, teachers ask me. "What do you mean by 'You can't do it wrong'?" Our new book has given me a fuller realization of the idea that a set of elements can't be practiced wrong. And this brings me back to another beautiful phrase of Nancy Lee's: "rewriting as the authors' right to evaluate or test every aspect of their work, comparing it with their original image." That's the heart of it. Sometimes teachers in workshops say, "Oh, you're asking us to give up our authority!" I say, "I'm really asking you to locate your authority."

Dear Nancy Lee, thank you and your three enterprising colleagues for being fellow workers in the "wide arable field" of writing.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Deen

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WHEN ASIANS WRITE: WHAT TO EXPECT IN GRAMMAR

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In the past few years, ESL programs around the country have experienced a great increase of students from East Asia. Whether coming as immigrants, refugees, or students, these Asians are eager to learn English. But their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are different from the majority of Americans who look to Europe, Africa, or Latin America for their roots. Many ESL teachers are not well prepared to deal with the special problems of Asian students, especially their linguistic difficulties. This paper focuses on a few of the potential areas of difficulty that Asian students, specifically Chinese and Vietnamese, have when they write English.

The Chinese and Vietnamese languages, believed to be structurally distinct, nevertheless have many important similarities. The most significant of these is that of word form. Words in both languages are monosyllabic and morphologically discrete; they do not change form in order to become different parts of speech. In English, word families may have a number of different forms corresponding to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, although some of these forms may look alike. (For example: "The plants need water" and "I will water the plants.") This concept of word families, nonexistent in Chinese and Vietnamese, frequently results in the use of one word form for another in written English.

1. If you would like to <u>enrollment</u> at Houston Community College, I shall show you what do you need to do and how many steps to complete <u>enroll</u> of this school.
2. To have a strong <u>economic</u> they need to sell everything to another nation.

In example 1 above, the noun "enrollment" and verb "enroll" are interchanged. Example 2 is an instance of an adjective used as a noun. Needless to say, students from other linguistic backgrounds can make similar mistakes, due to not having learned or assimilated the correct forms of a word family. But Asian students, particularly at the beginning levels, frequently display a lack of control over word form. Even at higher levels, once control of the concept of word form has been achieved, it is common to still find word form being used rather indiscriminately.

Verbs present particular problems for Chinese and Vietnamese speakers, especially the verb "be." But these problems can also be viewed from the point of view of word form, as seen from the following examples:

3. We will late for school

4. He may sick.

5. When I stilled in high school.

In examples 3 and 4, the adjectives "late" and "sick" are perceived as verbs, and the linking verb is not used. Although both sentences contain modals, the modals are not being mistaken for verbs; it is extremely rare to come across an incorrect sentence such as "We will to school." Therefore, it is not the modal that is perceived as a verb. It is less rare to see a sentence in which the adjective is used with no verb words, such as "We late for school" or "He sick." In these sentences, as in the examples, the adjectives appear to function as verbs, so the need for "be" disappears.

Example 5 is an obvious example of an adverb used as a verb. The adverb has even been conjugated into the past tense! Adding "be" to this sentence would be superfluous, according to the grammar of the writer.

This brings up another area of verb confusion: the unnecessary use of "be."

6. He'll be pass the test.

7. She doesn't understand why she must be pay attention.

8. When I was a student I liked to participate in some good seminars that was give me some aggressively idea.

9. I was lived in a refugee camp in five years.

Examples 6 and 7 are the opposite of examples 3 and 4. The verbs "pass" and "pay attention" are perceived as adjectives, so a linking verb is used with them. Again, a modal appears in each sentence, and the need for a verb in the base form with the modal is correctly expressed. But the correct verbs are already there; the writers just did not perceive them as verbs. In example 8, "be" is used as a conjugator. This situation is analogous to the auxiliary "do," which takes the tense and person markers away from the main verb in questions and negative sentences. In the writing of Asian students, "be" is often found performing a similar function. (Notice also the use of "aggressively" as an adjective in example 8.)

Example 9 is more problematic. The verb "live" is correctly perceived as a verb, as it appears in the past tense, so there would seem to be no need for "be" either as the main verb or as an auxiliary. Perhaps the writer of this sentence thought of "live" as expressing a state of being, and therefore, added "be" as a verb of existence.

Word form is a frequent problem that Asian, particularly Chinese and Vietnamese students have when writing English. But it is important to remember that writers are individuals who will have their own idiosyncratic problems with English and equally idiosyncratic ways of overcoming them. Not every Asian student will exhibit these problems, while students from other linguistic backgrounds may. It is not necessary to be expert in, or even familiar with, Chinese, Vietnamese, or any other language's grammar

in order to understand the problems these students have with English. But being familiar with the structure of English grammar is not necessarily a solution. The problems discussed above do not center around the English linking verb; they are problems of perception of word class and word form. Syllabi that go beyond the standard "This is an adjective, and this is what it does," to "This is how it must function in a sentence" can help bridge the gap between the English our students have now and the English we want to help them acquire.

The examples used in this article were collected from the author's Asian students.

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VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT--QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH AND A METHOD FOR GUIDED VOCABULARY PRACTICE

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A paragraph from an article by Elliot L. Judd entitled "Vocabulary Teaching and TESOL: A Need for Reevaluation of Existing Assumptions" (1978):

> As a final point, it is worth noting that much research now indicates that syntactic errors are a natural developmental phenomenon in second language learning (Selinker 1972; Dulay and Burt 1973; and Corder 1967). Instead of spending excessive time in perfecting the syntactical performance of our students, we should begin to work on our ESL students' vocabulary. Since many of the errors in syntax will only disappear with time, classroom exercises might be better devoted to vocabulary enrichment. It should be remembered that former ESL students who are now functioning in the uncontrolled English-speaking world of the American university are evaluated as much on their lexical knowledge as they are on their grasp of syntactic patterns (71).

This paragraph is noteworthy in two respects. First of all, it typifies the wealth of "good" advice for teachers found in teaching journals--advice which, while unsupported by actual research, makes

sense and appeals to us because of its practicality and our own immediate needs. Secondly, the author makes statements and suggestions that lead to several questions for research in the area of vocabulary. Before we make claims for an approach to the teaching of vocabulary, we need to determine what vocabulary should be taught and through classroom research, look at the effects of various teaching procedures.

Question #1. How important is vocabulary for non-native writers?
If we control for grammatical error, just how much does a too-simple vocabulary affect evaluation of ESL students' compositions by "the uncontrolled English-speaking world of the American university"? What about wordiness--long phrases when an exact word would do? What about the effect of using the right word with an incorrect derivational suffix (*I came to America because it is a freedom country.)? How does unsatisfactory word choice affect an ESL composition?

Question #2. When should vocabulary be taught?
Perhaps it can be said that vocabulary should be taught more intensively in ESL programs because, as Judd points out, the developmental stages of syntax (tense and articles, for example) simply take time. However, are there differences between the developmental stages of a reading vocabulary and of the vocabulary control and recall required to write? In terms of student production (i.e. actual usage in composition), research may find similar stages in learners' use of "academic vocabulary." This leads to the next question.

Question #3. What should we be teaching as vocabulary in composition class?

Much research is being done to describe and, ultimately, to define "formal adacemic discourse" in terms of syntax, intersentential relationships, and rhetorical patterns. There has been less emphasis, however, on the lexicon, if one excludes transition devices, signal words related to specific rhetorical patterns,[1] enumerators, and lexical cohesion.[2] The question of what characterizes the words used in academic writing needs to be further explored. Sandra Stotsky reports on a study of academic discourse (she contrasts it with literature) and observes that adacemic discourse contains "a higher proportion of words derived from Latin or Greek; a larger number of affixed words; and more multisyllabic words." (317). She points out the importance of affixed words and their contribution to the preciseness of academic discourse. Stotsky explains that preciseness has such a high value in nonfiction because it enables a writer to say more with fewer words and, on the reverse side of the coin, makes reading a quicker and more efficient process. Stotsky believes that a good bit of students' writing problems have to do with word form, and she cites Mina Shaughnessy's findings from Errors and Expectations (1977). Shaughnessy found that choosing and spelling the correct affix for a word were major problems for native speakers at the beginning college level. Examples of such problems:

effect / effective	--just add affix
permit / permissive	--make spelling change
diversity / agreement / aggression	--the writer needs to control use of several different noun suffixes

Obviously, non-native speakers need to learn how to control word form, and normally without the advantage of a lifetime of exposure to standard written English. This leads to the final and most difficult question to answer.

Question #4. How do non-native writers best acquire and come to use the lexicon of formal academic discourse? Through an intensive reading program? Through extensive reading? Through deliberate teaching and vocabulary development exercises?

My point has been to raise questions regarding the teaching of vocabulary in the composition class. I have intended to point out the importance of research in this field, specifically, classroom research. The last question is indeed the most difficult. It does not matter how much the field of discourse analysis reveals about the vocabulary of formal academic discourse. How strongly methodologists advocate the methods they design is inconsequential. Only with classroom research can knowledge about academic vocabulary be translated into defensible classroom methods. It is in this spirit that I would like to end this article with a few personal observations from teaching. In addition, I would like to explain (not advocate)a method for guided vocabulary practice. I invite readers to study the effect of this and other vocabulary development exercises on their students' writing.

In my composition classes, I have observed frequent errors in word form (*I want a success life.), incorrect affixes (also known as making up words: *The car had a spaceful interior.), and incorrect usage of unfamiliar words(*I wanted to reciprocate him.). The question was what words to focus on in the vocabulary component of my class, and how to help the students make fewer errors using unfamiliar words. I was unhappy with exercises that simply have students write sentences because the sentences written were often too simple or copied. I liked multiple-choice exercises found in several textbooks (Bander, Pack and Henrichsen, Raphael and Newman) that ask students to choose the correct word form for a given context:

Driving on that _____road is crazy. a)danger b) dangerous c) endanger d)dangerously

However, I wanted to get at and correct students' problems with usage, as in in the example above, *I wanted to reciprocate him. I settled on a kind of exercise which I call "guided sentence writing." In guided sentence writing, students are given three cues around which to build a sentence, one of which is the vocabulary word. Here are the directions written at the top of each exercise sheet: -

Directions: Write a sentence using the given words and underlined vocabulary word. You may change word order, use additional words, make nouns plural, change verb tense, and make verbs agree with their subjects. You must, however, use the given words in your sentence.

Sample exercises:

1. enable dream(n) Hawaiian vacation

Ex: Winning the sweepstakes enabled me to fulfill my dream of a Hawaiian vacation.

2. millions of families depend Wham-O Bleach

Ex: Millions of families depend on Wham-O Bleach.

5.

In writing the exercises, I include a mix of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs for vocabulary words (underlined) because one of the main purposes of these exercises is to get students to handle word form correctly and consistently. I try to inject a bit of humor when possible,

3. teachers admit seldom

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and I do not supply the students with usage clues for a word (e.g., we enable someone to do something; we depend on something). The vocabulary is discussed in class before students are given their exercise sheets, and the sheets are graded and handed back each week.

The exercises are quick and easy to prepare and the same format can be used for quizzes. The vocabulary for the exercises can come from the course materials: words can be selected by the instructor from textbook chapters, readings, or from a specific list of targeted vocabulary. Until research can effectively define the vocabulary of formal academic discourse (and this will probably have subdivisions by discipline), it seems that work with derivational classes and with vocabulary words that are of immediate concern to one's students is most profitable in the composition class. Sentence Construction and Sentence Combination by Alice C. Pack and Lynn E. Henrichsen (1980) each contain the same excellent appendix of approximately 200 advanced-level words and their derivations. Here is a sample from the Pack and Henrichsen appendix (Sentence Construction, 149):

NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
ability	enable	able	ably
absence	absent	absent	absently
achievement	achieve	achievable	-------
acquisition	acquire	acquisitive	acquisitively
act, activity, action	act	active	actively
adequacy	-------	adequate	adequately
admission	admit	admissible	admissibly
advantage	------	advantageous	advantageiously

Notes

[1] For an example of signal words integrated into an ESL composition textbook, see Paragraph Development by Martin L. Arnaudet and Mary Ellen Barrett.

[2] For a study of cohesion, see Cohesion in English by M.A.K. Halliday and Ruquaiya Hasan.

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ACADEMIC WRITING VS. COMPOSITION

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Observation and investigation indicate that academic writing tasks are generally quite different from those required in Freshman Composition classes, with respect to both process and product. This paper argues for teaching academic writing and describes selected practices which have been successful with advanced ESL students.

As Low (1982) argues, in the context of testing writing, the standard essay test is not a good test of the type of paper writing required of many students, especially foreign students, in their university programs. Among his various criticisms, the most relevant to the argument here are those dealing with the differences between writing a paper within the confines and context of a subject-matter course, particularly in science and technology, and writing Freshman Composition essays. Each year of teaching foreign students--in an institute, in the English Department, and in content courses--has strengthened my conviction that ESL teaching and testing should prepare students for writing tasks other than those in English courses, whether or not the latter are required. I believe that we should focus more on academic writing, both process and product, and less on the composing process (Zamel 1982). Our analyses have shown that academic writing tasks require very little generating of ideas, but rather the student's task is to select, organize, and express information, either to answer an essay question or to write an informative or argumentative paper in which there is little or no room for personal opinion. In our work, we have found little support for the theory of

contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan 1967). Differences in linguistic-cultural background do show up at the sentence level--Venezuelan English and Korean English are still noticeably different with respect to errors and mistakes, and students from all fields and languages have problems with academic vocabulary (Martin 1976)--but there seems to be a factor of organizational-logical-rhetorical control exercised by the data, no matter what their form. This classroom observation is supported by work carried out in Shanghai by Johns, Brosnahan, and Coe (1983), who urge that composition teachers look at "real" paragraph development and modify their syllabi accordingly. While I agree with Zamel's (1983) criticism of composition pedagogy and texts, I join Johns, Brosnahan, and Coe in viewing the product, and thus the process, of academic writing as being very different from those of Freshman Composition.

We have tried a variety of tasks and procedures in an effort to identify those which most effectively and efficiently produce transferable skills of value to students. We have attempted to analyze these activities in order to incorporate useful organizational-conceptual principles into other activities. This paper will briefly describe the activities which appear to be of greatest utility in advanced pre-collegiate and university writing courses.

On the basis of information gathered by 1) formal and informal surveys of university professors' writing assignments, 2) our own experiences in university courses in a variety of fields and levels (none of the teachers involved has been an English major), and 3) interviews of former and current students enrolled in university courses in diverse fields at both the graduate and the undergraduate level, we have centered not just the writing instruction but rather the entire 4-5 hour block of instruction in all skill areas principally on the rhetorical functions of informing (exposition) and persuading (argumentation). Working from these macro-functions, we have elaborated a list of communicative functions, drawing heavily from such sources as Munby's (1978) taxonomy, the Reading and Thinking in English series (Widdowson 1980), and Academic English (Rossi and Gasser 1983). We use this list of microfunctions as we select and create materials for each class, no two ever being identical because we devote a substantial portion of the time to a set of mini-ESP units, in which students work with field-specific content related to their majors.

We agree 100% with Kaplan (1982) that the ESL student should be provided with content, that the writing teacher's concern should be what the student does with the data. Both Kaplan and Low (1982) were referring specifically to testing, but we are more concerned with teaching. In the classroom, we do have time to work through the whole process of selection and evaluation; we are not constrained by time to concentrate only on organization and expression. We are not teaching content; neither are we rewarding library work or prior knowledge. We provide the content. The student's task is to read and understand the content, then to use it appropriately in the assigned task. This data source may take one or more of several forms:

a. sentence combining exercises serve a variety of purposes such as providing a check on reading comprehension, eliciting specific grammar points, conveying needed information, etc., as well as modeling for the student the type of information and organization suitable for a particular kind of paper. Our exercises do not in any way resemble those described and criticized by Zamel (1980), but rather they are almost entirely paragraph or longer exercises such as those found

in Sentence Combination (Pack and Henrichsen 1981) and The Writer's Options (Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg 1979). Although some are used for individual assignments, many are done by the entire group and discussed step by step, as I have described elsewhere (McKee 1982a and b).

b. data in non-prose form, with or without accompanying text, give the student practice in expressing information already acquired. Authentic text in the student's field is a good source (e.g., Herbst's pamphlet contains a great deal of information but very little prose text). We ask our students to bring us copies of articles of interest to them. We create exercises based on these materials.

c. lists of bits of information, such as the last exercises in Sentence Combination, require the student to create at the sentence level, much as one does when constructing prose from notes taken during a lecture or while reading.

d. reading selections (one or more on a topic) require comprehension, selection, and possibly evaluation before writing in answer to the specific questions(s).

e. lectures, alone or in combination with reading selections, serve the same purposes as reading selections but require aural comprehension and provide opportunities to help the student learn how and when to question.

The students take notes on the readings and lectures, always having access to their notes and to any printed material given out, for we are not testing recall. The writing tasks range from expression of all the data given, as in a sentence combining exercise, to selection of data to answer an essay question to selection and evaluation of evidence to support a thesis in a documented argumentative essay.

In this last task, we have abandoned the traditional library research paper and turned to a group project, a four-week project in which all the students are given the same source material with instruction in how to read it, how to evaluate it, how to deal with statistical data, and how to write it up (Horowitz 1983a). Each student writes an individual paper, choosing a side or arguing that the evidence is inconclusive. This project, in our opinion, truly teaches the students how to select and evaluate evidence in the way that they will have to do this when they are writing for professors who know the fields. The Freshman Compositon teacher in the traditional research paper course is forced to rely only on the apparent quality of the source (a professional journal versus Reader's Digest) and whatever can be discerned about internal logic and consistency when evaluating this aspect of the documented essay, the aspect which will be of most concern to the content area professor.

The preceding example is the practice most obviously and directly related to future academic writing. It is not necessary to hope that the skills learned will be transferrable, for these are the skills needed in academic writing in most fields. However, other activities have also proved useful. Among these, the most clearly relevant are those which involve analytical and critical thinking in English. We have had great success with such activities as the Propaganda Game (McKee 1982c), which involves no actual writing but whose utility as a generalized pre-writing

activity is demonstrated by the conspicuous effects in such areas as argument skills, careful reading, certain syntactic and semantic problems, and organization. This activity is one of two "stamp out the error" tasks we permit, for we are absolutely opposed to putting ungrammatical sentences in front of students.

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Although the subject of culture shock does not fall strictly within the parameters of topics discussed in TECFORS, we wanted to share the following article with our readers for several reasons. First, since culture shock happens to all of our students, it's important for us to know as much as possible about what it is and how to be helpful; this article provides a great deal of well-documented information. Also, the article contains reading exercises, some of which could be turned into writing assignments. For reasons of space, we are presenting the article in two parts. Look for the second one in the January issue. For a copy of the references for this article, please write the author, Michele Molnaire, Griffin College, 2005-5th Avenue, Seattle WA 98101.

MEETING CULTURE SHOCK HEAD ON

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This paper will present classroom techniques for dealing directly with culture shock, the grieving process, individual perceptions and cross-cultural understanding. Psychological research relating culture shock and the grieving process will be discussed. The teacher's role as cross-cultural facilitator will be examined, and field test results of individual and group activities will be described.

Cross-cultural adjustment is a very timely topic. It is the focus of more and more journal articles, research papers, chapters in methodology texts, and handbooks for teachers. There are a few ESL textbooks written on a modified cultural assimilator model. Everybody knows about culture shock and its effect on students. Everybody except the students.

Three years ago, after seven years of teaching ESL/EFL, after two experiences with culture shock myself, after countless conversations about students in teachers' offices ("Tsk, the poor dear really has culture shock, doesn't she?"), it finally occurred to me that the situation could be radically, almost magically, improved by telling students precisely what was happening to them, and telling them that it was normal and that it would (probably) stop happening to them someday.

The culture shock phenomenon has been under serious investigation during the past twenty years. The following is a small sample of research on different aspects of culture shock: Psychological (Oberg, 1972; Arren-

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dondo-David, 1981; Davidson, 1980; Hertz, 1981), physiological (Walsh, 1979; Arenas, Cross and Willard, 1980; Clark, 1982), economic (Howard, 1980; Foster, 1965; Sierking, Anchor and Marston, 1980), intra-national (Brocy, 1970; Hertz, 1981; Smith, 1982; Renduelers and Granco, 1976), and bicultural (Li-Repac, 1980; Maruyama, 1982; Shore and Manson, 1981; Atkinson, Morton and Sue, 1979).

The Culture Shock Phenomenon

Culture shock is the emotional reaction which occurs when a person is no longer able to predict the behavior of others around him. Walsh (1979) calls it an "upheaval of the very depths of emotional personality." It occurs when someone moves out of one culture into another for an extended period of time, usually longer than three months. It happens to virtually everyone, although to differing degrees. Both the person who wants to be in the new culture and the person who doesn't want to be there will experience it. Sometimes the effect is severe; sometimes it is scarcely noticed.

Symptons include excessive complaining about the new culture; resistance to the language, food, customs, etc., of the new culture; tendency to hang around only with persons of one's culture or language group; depression and irritability; strongly negative self-image; paranoia; and excessive sleeping.

It can be alleviated by (1) knowing it exists; (2) accepting the inevitability of personal change and adjustment; (3) being kind to oneself and not forcing the issue; (4) finding people from one's own culture who have lived in the new culture long enough to have come out of culture shock and have a more objective viewpoint; (5) getting help from professional counselors.

Low assimilation of the new culture has been shown to correlate with high blood pressure, suicide, morbidity, anxiety, depression, anger, dependency and increased marital conflict. (Walsh, 1979; Howard, 1980).

Should the sojourner return to his own culture, he will find that his successful assimilation of the host culture has put him out of sync with his own culture. This affront to one's sense of fair play has been termed "reverse culture shock" or "re-entry shock."

As acculturation is essentially an emotional problem with emotional solutions, the affective or subjective elements of personal experiences of students and teachers play an important part. My own experiences with culture shock began in 1973 when I went to West Germany to teach English. Although I was aware of cultural differences, I was totally ignorant of the concept of culture shock, and I suffered from it severely. It was not until I returned to the United States three years later and met some former Peace Corps volunteers that I discovered that my reaction had a name and was universal. And this new information allowed me to be much more conscious and tolerant of myself when the phenomenon repeated itself during a two-year stay in Iran. Being aware of culture shock also eased my return reaction.

Grief

Grieving is a natural, necessary and universal healing process, but most people do not expect to experience grief unless it is connected to a loss due to death. Actually, the greiving process is engaged every time any loss--emotional or material, concrete or abstract--occurs. Whether a

person loses a wallet, a spouse or a homeland, he experiences grief to varying degrees. The difference is in the emotional intensity and the duration of the adjustment process.

Heikkenen (1979) defines grief as "the process of separating ourselves from our losses." The paradigms describing the grieving process which were developed by Kubler-Ross and others--shock, followed by anger and guilt, followed by depression, and finally by acceptance--not necessarily good always but a necessary step--apply to the culture shock adjustment process as well as to death-reactive grief. (Kubler-Ross, 1975; Arrendondo-David, 1981).

In terms of therapy, the person who is grieving needs to: (1) identify the loss that requires grieving; (2) clarify difficulties being experienced; (3) identify patterns in his own behavior (and in the behavior expected in the new culture); and (4) give himself permission to feel and express grief. (Heikkenen, 1979).

The most important admonition from all the various counselors doing grief research and therapy is that the expression of emotions in the grieving process is absolutely necessary for a person to recover. If a person plateaus at one of the steps along the way, the problem will continue, unresolved, indefinitely.

Are We Qualified?

ESL teachers get involved with the culture shock of their students on basically two levels. On the human level, most have a natural inclination to try to reduce the suffering of other human beings. On the professional level, the teacher's own effectiveness is hampered by the phenomenon: students suffering from culture shock generally have rather low motivation for learning English.

Somebody needs to tell them. Cross-cultural trainer Pierre Casse (1979) said, "People must be trained to master a process they must continually confront. Without awareness and perception, the adjustment phenomenon itself is perceived as a threat to basic and psychological security."

It has been shown in research that foreign students at American universities are far less likely to take advantage of psychological counseling services than their American counterparts. (Baron, 1975; Dadfar and Friedlander, 1982). Also, fewer and fewer incoming Southeast Asian refugees have American sponsor families, and more are being sponsored by large agencies or other Southeast Asians. This conjures up visions of students alone and depressed in dorm rooms and of refugee families cloistered in their apartments (The familiar: Teacher--"What did you do last weekend?" Student--"I stay home.") and indeed this is often the case.

The ESL teacher becomes a classroom therapist basically by default: there are very few professional psychologists or medical doctors who are trained in the area of cross-cultural analysis and treatment.

Also, cross-cultural psychology has a linguistic barrier, alexisthymia --a situation in which not only is a direct translation of terms impossible, but the concept does not even exist in the other language. For example, a translation of "I feel depressed" might only be possible as "I feel sad." (Nguyen, 1983).

A sensitive ESL teacher in frequent contact with students is in a good position to monitor their individual progress in acculturation, to understand their personalities, and to apply an acquired background knowledge of their various cultures (Nguyen, 1983). And if the teacher has had the personal experience of culture shock himself, so much the better.

In his book Future Shock Alvin Toffler (1970) took the concept of culture shock one step further, and he described the general and/or acute malaise in Western societies caused by the inability to adjust quickly enough to societal changes. The negative effect is so widespread that he recommends broadly-based counseling that "not only draws on full-time professional advice givers, but on multitudes of lay experts as well. We must recognize that what makes an expert in one type of crisis is not necessarily formal education, but the very experience of having undergone a similar crisis himself."

It is this same problem of volume--large numbers of foreign students and refugees in emotional pain without enough qualified professionals to help them--that justifies and encourages the ESL teacher to become part of the solution.

Here in Seattle, I have been fortunate to have access to the staff of the Asian Counseling and Referral Service. The director, Dr. Quynh Nguyen, a Vietamese psychiatrist and refugee himself, has given several seminars and workshops on mental health problems of refugees and the teachers role in crisis intervention. He believes very strongly that teachers should discuss culture shock with their students, and points out that, particularly in Asian cultures, a teacher is seen as an appropriate counselor for this kind and other kinds of personal problems.

Ultimately the question put to ESL teachers is: If we don't address the culture shock probelm, who will?

Whose Culture Shock?

Although culture shock is a universal phenomenon, special aspects of it occur in certain situations. Different groups of people seem to have their culture shock triggered or compounded by different factors.

In the United States

Newcomers to the American society can be roughly broken into two groups: foreign residents--students and people working here who will eventually return to their own countries; and refugees and immigrants, who will not return.

Foreign residents come from a wide variety of cultures, and so there may be many variables in the causes of their culture shock. Foreign students often experience shock in dealing with an educational system with vastly different values and customs than their own. People from non-technical societies experience a technology shock. People from similarly technical Western societies experience a particularly insidious form of shock. Lulled by the surface "sameness", they become confused when the deeper level of the society turns out to be very different. People from societies in which the family is dominant over the individual experience a sort of "delayed teen" phase of individuation, exhibiting rebellious, limit-seeking behavior which would be perceived as normal and timely for an American teenager, but which appears inappropriate when it occurs in a thirty-year-old adult.

Refugees and immigrants obviously do not plan to go back home, so the pressure on them to survive and hopefully prosper is very great. Often

these people have experienced personal tragedy in their homeland, and thus have compounded grief. The Southeast Asian refugees in particular have often lost several family members and have lived through a good deal of terror. Also many come from non-technical cultures and cannot cope easily with American technology.

Refugees from Communist or Socialist countries often have dependency problems--they find that they have political freedom, but are suddenly also totally responsible for their own lives; they no longer have the security of knowing that a government system will take care of them.

The culture shock of foreigners in the United Sates has one aspect which is unique in all the world. I am referring to the Myth of America which is perpetuated by most other people of the world. Due to its political, technological and economic prominence, probably no other country is so widely loved, envied and hated, often all at once, and no other country inspires such hopes, dreams and expectations in the hearts of prospective residents. Naturally, the higher the expectation, the harder the fall, and when the newcomer finds that the streets are paved with asphalt after all and the milk and honey is priced out of reach, the disappointment, depression and sense of betrayal are inevitable.

Toffler contends that future shock occurs because the Western societies are changing more quickly than even their own natives can adapt. (1970) There is no more status quo. Therefore, people from traditional, status quo societies, now matter how culturally adaptable, can never expect to stand on firm ground again--at least not in the foreseeable future. The best they can hope for is to walk onto the quicksand with the rest of us.

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